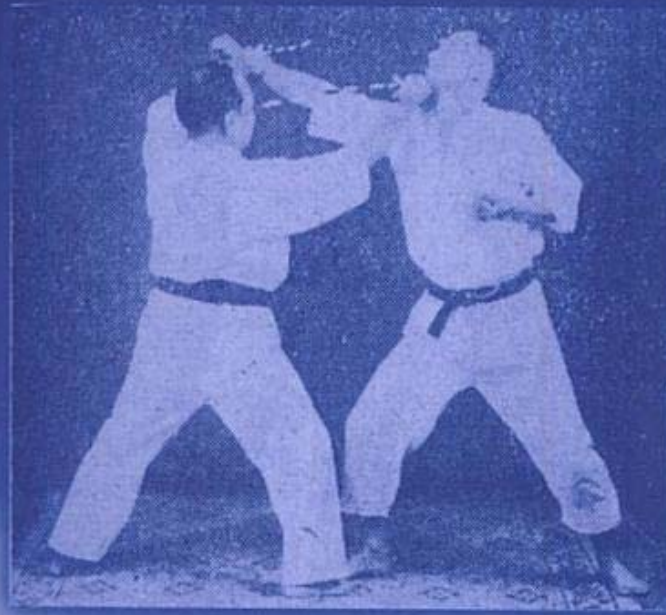


Hidden Karate

The True Bunkai For The Heian Katas and Naihanchi



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Gennosuke Higaki

CHAMP

Biography / Gennosuke Higaki

Higaki began to learn Karate when he was a junior high school student, and he trained Ryukyu-kobujyutsu, Daito-ryu Aiki-jujyutsu, and Shinkage-ryu. In the first half of 20 years old, Higaki learned under Master Shozan Kubota who were taught by Master Kenwa Mabuni and Master Gichin Funakoshi, and he received the oral instruction of bunkai of Kata. Although the bunkai of Kata has been a secret for a long time, Higaki decided to open it to the public for junior training. He introduces the homepage entitled "Hidden Karate" on the Internet to the public, and many people agree with it. Now he is working various activities energetically, such as seminar.

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Chapter 1

What is Karate ?

Section 1 The Definition of Karate

When one is asked the question : What is Karate? What comes to mind to differentiate it from kickboxing or Chinese Kempo? They are all martial arts, which employ punches and kicks, but there must be some essential difference between them.

Although we use the term “karate”, there is an extremely large number of “karates” that exist today. First off they can be divided by style. Beginning with the four major styles on the mainland, and the three major Okinawan styles, there are countless numbers of organizations that have arisen as styles have split or new branches of styles have been formed.

Then there are styles divided by rules. There are various competition rules, the main ones being “non-contact”, “full padding”, “full contact”, and “glove rules”, etc., and even those, which have added elements such as, mat techniques, etc.

There are so many variations in styles and rules that it is impossible to get a precise overall picture of karate. This phenomenon is not found in other martial arts such as Kendo and Judo. In fact it may be correct to say that there is no definition of karate. That, however makes it difficult to further discuss this topic, so for the purpose of this book, I would like to divide karate into the following categories. Okinawan karate before it was imported into the mainland of Japan, and the karate that was developed on the mainland after it was imported.

Also, since this book concentrates on the bunkai, or the use of katas as its main thrust, I will not include those new wave styles, which do not maintain the practice of kata. This book deals only with those styles which predominately practice Shuri style katas which were created in Okinawa.

While I realize that there are many different views and philosophies about martial arts and karate, I will use certain terms for the sake of practical expression and organization.

From a historical standpoint, this book will concentrate on karate after it was imported to the mainland. I will concentrate on other details elsewhere. I have also written about other martial arts, such as the traditional arts of jujutsu and kenjutsu, and the modern art of judo for the purpose of comparison. Karate has been influenced most, perhaps, by traditional martial arts, the best known being Shinkage Ryu Heiho (kenjutsu).

I will also refer to “shintai sousa” (proper body mechanics), which has received considerable attention recently, as “jutsu”, or a complete technique and the form of punches and kicks as “waza” as separate techniques. “Kata bunkai” refers to the use of kata.

Section 2 What is Kata ?

With the spread of karate much thought has been put into different methods of holding competitions, such as “non contact”, “use of protective equipment”, “full contact”, “gloves”, etc. The World Karate Federation World Championships have reached their 17th year and are becoming more and more extravagant. There is even talk of karate becoming an Olympic event.

Along with kumite competition, there is also the extremely interesting part of karate, kata competition. Recently the WKF rules have changed to “tournament style”, increased the number of shitei (compulsory) katas, and required the kata bunkai for the finals in team events. All of these events have increased the need for further study of bunkai in Japan, the birthplace of karate.

The question, which arises here, is “What is kata ?” The martial art of karate developed on the island of Okinawa under the influence of Chinese kempo ; under the historical backdrop of the domination of the Satsuma feudal lords. It is believed to have developed in a unique way. The major characteristic is that it was transmitted orally, using no written training manuals. An exception to this is the “Bubishi” of the Naha style, but that is really believed to be the transmission of the White Crane kata of Chinese Kempo.

A major difference between Okinawan karate and karate practiced on the mainland is that because it was prohibited by law, Okinawan karate was practiced in secret, and passed down orally. On the mainland, while there were some schools, which adhered to the principle of “Mongai fushutsu”, or keeping the knowledge within the school, for the most part, many styles were given names and transmitted openly.

Characteristics of martial arts of the mainland are :

1. Since katas are practiced with two people, the roles of defense and offense are clearly defined so the use of the techniques is easy to understand.
2. There are instructional manuals. (Techniques are clear.)
3. There is a system for advancement in rank.
4. The styles have names. (The lineage of instructors is clear.)
5. For the most part they have been handed down by masters who were part of the samurai class.

Okinawan karate, on the other hand, differs from other martial arts in that it was not taught in dojos, it did not give names to its styles, and it was taught in secret. The following are its characteristics :

1. It was passed down through katas performed individually.
2. There were no written texts.
3. The method of advancement was unclear.

4. There were no styles.
5. For the most part it was practiced by the samurai class, but because it was practiced in secret, there was no system, which clearly defined one person as the founder of the school.

In the end, the only thing we are left with in Okinawan karate is the katas. Thus, in order to know the meaning of karate, it is necessary to know the meaning of the katas, which have been passed down. In other words, we must clarify the katas, which have been left for us in order to know what the true nature of the original karate was.

Until now, most of the study of kata has been concerned with such literary issues as to which Chinese character to use or superficial things such as how each movement differs from style to style. There has been no written discussion, however, of the technical meaning of the actual techniques involved. I believe that it has not been possible due to various factors, such as problems within the different styles, or organizations, or between teachers and students.

The primary purpose of kata was to provide a record of offensive and defensive techniques. Of course the person who created a kata knew the meaning of its movements. There was a possibility, though, that future generations would not know the meaning of the movements by just looking at them, so there was a need to orally pass down the meanings of the techniques, so they could be recreated. As I stated earlier, if one understands the bunkai, or meaning of a kata, the external differences need not be such a problem.

Section 3 Okinawan Karate

Because karate was practiced in secret, it is not known for sure when it first began. References to karate were seen in print around the middle of the Meiji period (Meiji period: 1868-1921) after the passing of Masters Anko Itosu of Shuri style and Kanryo Higaonna of Naha style. Before that, because it was passed down orally, there were no written records.

Also, according to oral legends, there are many stories of various masters being taught by Chinese emissaries, or having gone to China to learn first hand. Thus, it is believed that Okinawan karate was influenced considerably by Chinese kempo. Since the history of this period is covered elsewhere, it is beyond the scope of this book. I will only introduce an outline after the Meiji period.

After the Meiji Restoration (1868) the interest in martial arts fell into decline. Around the time of the Seinan no Eki (Coup d'etat) in 1877 the study of kendo and judo gained popularity under the government's plan to "enrich the nation and build strong a defense." In 1876 a bare handed means of self defense was recognized under the government's proclamation against the use of the sword.

In 1879 Master Anko Itosu opened the first karate dojo in Okinawa and began teaching his

first students openly. Only his students received attention for being awarded the rank Koushu (High rank) in the military conscription examination. They went on to return home as decorated heroes after the Japan-China war of 1894, and Japan-Russia war of 1904.

In 1901 karate became part of the public school curriculum. At that time Okinawan karate was practiced individually, and there were no style names, rather, it was referred to as “someone or some place’s hand.” In 1904 Master Itosu created the Heian katas as a tool for teaching in the public junior high schools. That same year karate was first introduced in the mass media. An article written by Master Gichin Funakoshi in which he interviewed Master Anko Asato appeared in the Ryukyu Newspaper. Karate gained interest, not only as a method of self-defense, but also for physical education, and there was a concerted effort, including the use of public demonstrations, to introduce it to the general public.

In his “Ten Principles of Okinawan Karate” (1908), Master Anko Itosu wrote “One should know the meaning and application of a kata before practicing it.” From this we know for a fact that the meaning (application) for katas existed at that time.

Section 4 Introduction of Karate to the Mainland

The two public demonstrations by Master Gichin Funakoshi in 1916 at the Butokuden in Kyoto, and the other at the Tokyo Physical Education Exposition in 1922 were the first to introduce Okinawan karate to the mainland. For some reason 1922 is given as the date of the introduction of karate to the mainland in written documents. In that year Master Funakoshi was invited by Dr. Jigoro Kano, the founder of judo, to teach karate for several months at the Kodokan. So, if we are talking about the spread of karate rather than the introduction, then the year 1922 can be credited as the beginning. Master Funakoshi never returned to Okinawa, concentrating instead on spreading karate throughout the mainland, primarily in the universities.

There were, however, certain difficulties in having karate recognized, compared to judo and kendo.

- 1: Judo and kendo already had national organizations.
- 2: Dr. Jigoro Kano had endeavored to unified judo.
- 3: Okinawa did not have equal status on the mainland.
- 4: Katas were practiced individually, so it was difficult to access karate’s true ability.

In 1924 Master Funakoshi promoted his first student to first-degree black belt.

In 1929 Master Chojun Miyagi created the first “style” of karate.

In the year 1931 Okinawan karate was recognized as a part of judo by the Ministry of Education.

The Chinese characters were changed from “Chinese hand” to “empty hand” around this time.

Master Kenwa Mabuni established Shito Ryu in 1934. Likewise, Shotokan Ryu, which took until 1935 to formulate and develop its curriculum, established its full time dojo, Shotokan in Soshigaya, Tokyo in 1939. Although Master Funakoshi did not give his style a name, other styles and schools such as Goju ryu and Shito ryu began to appear. Unlike judo and kendo, which unified jujutsu and kenjutsu respectively, karate became further divided into separate styles.

I would like to summarize these trends.

Judo and kendo moved toward unification.

1. After the Meiji Restoration, there was a move to unify these systems, while maintaining the old styles.
2. Competitions were established according to unified rules enabling a clear method of evaluating ability.
3. A standardized system of awarding belts was employed.
4. Katas were unified and recreated.

Karate moved in a factional direction.

1. In the Showa period styles were established, and further divided into numerous branches and sub styles.
2. There many different rules for competition.
3. Promotions for rank were held by the Japan Karate Federation, but each style recognizes their own ranks.
4. Katas were not unified.

The war ended and the Federation of all Japan Karate Do was established. The different styles joined, and "non-contact" rules were unified for kumite, and the first tournament was held in 1957. The problem of how to unify katas, however, was left up to each style, and remained unsolved. A system to teach beginners comprised of basics, moving basics, and one-, two- or three-step sparring was established. To this day, however, there has evolved no teaching methodology for intermediate and advanced students. This is especially true since only fairly basic katas have been introduced openly, and many practitioners are not satisfied with the bunkai, or application, which has been introduced.

Section 5 Karate as a Sport

The original meaning of karate as an art of self-defense has become lost with the development of karate on the mainland. Also the trend for it to become a competitive sport has become stronger. Especially after the war, martial arts have become known primarily as a sport. Martial arts had been once considered an important part of a military education. After the war, with the introduction of democracy, there was a trend to change the name from a "martial art" to a "sport."

The introduction of judo as an Olympic sport in the Tokyo Olympics in 1964 spurred this trend. Thus begun the great epoch where, while there was kumite before the war, rules

were established and kumite developed into an official event. Just as judo and kendo were spread with competition at its core, with the use of mats and protective gear, making competition possible, karate followed along the same path. As the number of tournaments increased, the purpose changed from defending one's self to winning in competition, and more and more practice was spent on kumite competition and kata as well. In competition rules, unlike in self-defense, certain dangerous techniques are forbidden, so only those techniques, which are applicable to the competition, are emphasized, and that is what makes a sport. As a side note, it has been said that the reason kata competition takes place before kumite competition was to determine whether or not the competitors have sufficient ability to compete in kumite.

Chapter 2

Problems Facing Karate

Section 1 Unusable Katas

The greatest problem facing modern karate is the gap between kumite and kata. In other martial arts, almost all katas are practiced with two people, so it is possible to learn the bunkai, or application from the beginning. In judo, for instance, the throwing kata for a Seoinage is the same as an Ippon Seoinage. Therefore it is impossible in judo not to know the application of the Seoinage.

In contrast, the chasm between the movements of kumite and the movements of kata is large, and there is no explanation for how to get from one to the other. Furthermore, bunkai or application of katas is not clear, or the explanations that exist are not practical. This is the unfortunate situation for many karate practitioners.

So, the fact that only strikes and kicks can be used is a simple problem that most karate practitioners face at some time.

It is possible to come up with two major reasons why katas cannot be used.

1. They are unusable due to insufficient practice.
2. The explanation itself is incorrect.

Let's look at both of these possibilities.

Part 1 Katas are Unusable Due to Insufficient Practice

In judo the "over the Seoinage" and the "nage no kata" are the same technique, but it takes a lot of practice to be able to use it. Accordingly, unless one practices a certain amount, they will not be able "own" that technique, so the notion that a "technique cannot be used without sufficient practice" is valid. Also, since there are some techniques, which are prohibited in kumite competition, it is possible that they will not be practiced.

It is often said that "unless one practices for 20-30 years, one will not be able to actually use it." Is that really true, though? It has been over 80 years since karate was introduced to the mainland. There are many karate practitioners who have been training for over 20-30 years primarily using katas, but there are perhaps only a small percentage who are able to apply them practically.

Furthermore, if it takes 20 to 30 years of practice to be able to use a technique, it can hardly be considered practical. In the case of other martial arts on the mainland, historically there are many instances where it is possible to attain a master ranking after training for five to six years. Of course polishing one's techniques takes a lifetime, but if it takes too long to learn the techniques of a particular style, then the very existence of that style may be in danger. In the days when the average life expectancy was fifty years, if it took thirty years to master the techniques of one's style, then the practitioner would die before they would be able to pass it on and the style would die out in one generation. Thus we see that the idea that insufficient practice is responsible for kata being unusable is not applicable here.

Part 2 Explanations for the Katas are Incorrect to Begin with

Currently there more than a few instances where the bunkai, or application for katas, which one has learned is not practical. This may not be a problem for beginners, but after one has trained for a while, or if they have trained in other martial arts many may have questions about whether certain bunkai are really applicable or not. Even if one learns from a great master, if the bunkai is not applicable, what they have learned is merely a dance, and has no meaning as a martial art.

So, why are there techniques, which cannot be used? I believe we have to accept the possibility that the bunkai itself is incorrect. If one accepts that fact, then even if one practices for twenty to thirty years, it is makes sense that they will still be unusable. This would the same if one were to practice a Chinese character beautifully, but incorrectly, for many years ; one would not be able to communicate the correct meaning to someone else. Practicing incorrect characters is the same as practicing incorrect techniques. One will not be able to overtake one's opponent. If an instructor teaches incorrect techniques, the people who have learned from him will have wasted a lot of time and energy. In the case of case incorrect explanations, we can assume the following.

1. One hasn't been taught.
2. One has been taught incorrectly.

1. One Hasn't been Taught

Actually there are many instances where one knows the movements of a kata, but doesn't know the bunkai. It is also possible to pass a black belt examination by only performing a kata by itself. As a result, there are many instructors who do not know the bunkai for katas, and those instructors produce instructors like themselves again and again. There are some who say that even if one hasn't been taught bunkai, if they practice long enough, they will be able to figure it out on their own naturally. In fact, though, as I previously mentioned, even if one practices a kata for a long time, if it is incorrect, they will not be able to use it.

2. If One is Taught the Bunkai Incorrectly

In olden times, one would be at a disadvantage if their techniques were seen by others. Perhaps the same was true when karate was introduced to the mainland and the Okinawan karate masters decided to only teach the most basic katas. In other words, they were influenced by the so-called traditional Japanese practice of Mongai fushutu or Isshi Soden (Not letting the body of knowledge to be known outside the school, or passing on the body of knowledge only to one's own child.)

Okinawan karate was no exception from other martial arts in that only those who were deemed of sufficient character were allowed to begin training. Other than a teacher putting himself in a disadvantageous position, there were two reasons for that. First, since they were teaching potentially killing techniques, it was necessary to determine whether

or not the student would act violently. Second, it was necessary to judge a person's character in order to prevent that master's teachings from being leaked to the outside.

When Okinawan karate, which became strictly disciplined in such a manner, was taught in schools after the Meiji period, there were bound to be problems with teaching such dangerous techniques to the general public. Thus there was a need to protect the core teachings while opening it up to the public. There arose a need to make a distinction between "regular students" and "technically advanced students."

Martial arts on the mainland developed a system of beginning level, intermediate level, and advanced level, so that the regular student could continue learning techniques, while not showing the advanced or hidden techniques to the general public.

Compared to that, Okinawan karate had no such system. It is believed that the masters changed the techniques or changed the explanation in order not to openly teach to beginners or regular students.

Until now, it has been written in karate articles that certain movements were changed or abbreviated on purpose. This may account for unusable katas.

Part 3 Is it Possible to Block to the Front and Back Simultaneously?

One of the most difficult techniques in karate is the yama kamae or manji kamae. The bunkai explanation for it is that it is a defense against multiple attackers (to the front and to the back). It is not as if we are a super hero, so why does such an explanation exist? I believe it is because either they are confusing movie action with reality, or they have never seen the original bunkai for this technique. It is hard enough to defend against an attacker from the front; I don't believe it is possible to defend against an opponent to the rear who you can't even see.

If you try to defend against two opponents simultaneously, you will see that you would have to train as if you were a stunt actor. If, let's say one could defend against attacks from the front and the rear, and even manage to counter against the opponent in the front, the rear opponent is not going to wait for that attack to finish.

Also, even if one is attacked from the front and rear, one can avoid both attacks by moving. There is no need to increase the risk factor when one is already in a dangerous situation. Even beginners can understand this if given a rational explanation.

Part 4 Original Form and Application

The people who originally created katas, in order to teach certain techniques to future generations, made them based on a set pattern of movements against an imaginary opponent. At that time they were probably practiced with a partner, or if one did not have a partner, one could practice against a pretend partner, like shadow boxing. That was

how the original katas came about. That is also where the original application exists. Depending on the movement, however, a technique could have different applications, so when a master taught his students the kata he would also teach them the different applications. This was a cause for confusion.

In martial arts on the mainland katas are practiced with a partner, and there are teaching materials, so the original techniques are passed down. Also, the application is taught separately within the framework of the curriculum of that particular style, reducing the confusion between katas and application.

In the case of karate, however, where katas are practiced individually, when numerous versions of bunkai are taught, from the point of view of the learner, the original kata, the application, and the bunkai are all the same. In that case, depending on the whim of the instructor, the importance of the kata and the application may be reversed, and through the creation of new applications of the application itself, it is possible that it may end up quite different than the original form. If that is the case then the movements of the kata themselves may be influenced by the new application and undergo change.

This explanation is believed to be the reason for so many different variations of the same kata. The only way to know which of those is the original would be to go back in a time machine and ask the person who made it. I do believe, though, that we can recreate something close to the original by reenacting the most rational bunkai.

Section 2 Why do We Practice Unusable Katas ?

Why do we practice katas, which are unusable ? One can think of several reasons for that. I would like to categorize them as follows.

Part 1 Katas as Tradition

The techniques, which have been passed down from the past are important to traditional martial arts and traditional arts, and they must be preserved. That is because the wisdom of generations is built into them. Even in modern judo and kendo it is understandable that kata remains as the theoretical aspect of those martial arts.

Also in certain martial arts, there are those katas, which are important since they express the identity and theory of that particular style. Through the practice of those katas, which have been created by the founder of the style, it is considered ideal to become as close to the founder as possible. Likewise in the case of karate, it is thought to be important to learn techniques through the correct practice of traditional katas, which have been passed down.

Part 2 Preventing the Deterioration of Techniques

An often heard reason for practicing katas is to avoid the deterioration of techniques. In

other words, if one doesn't practice basics and kata, and only practices free sparring, their techniques will deteriorate and they will need to fix them through the practice of kata. At the basis of this idea is the notion that "basics are important." This is a common theme central to all knowledge, not just martial arts.

Let's look at an example from judo. To learn the over the Seoinage, one starts to learn by "uchikomi" practice, where they learn the basics, such as "kuzushi", "tsukuri", and "kake", leading up to the actual technique. Then they actually perform the technique in "randori", or free style with the opponent resisting the throw. So, unlike uchikomi practice, one isn't always able to execute the throw using proper form. If one only practices free style or "randori" their form will deteriorate so they have to practice "uchikomi" to correct their form. To be sure, there is no real difference between the form and free style practice, so there is no problem with this method of teaching.

In karate, however, where the katas have been stylized, this method may not be appropriate. This is because the purpose of the stylization is, apart from the real meaning, to strive for beauty when performing them. It is important to consider this and think about exactly what the basics are.

Part 3 Feudal Student Teacher Relationship

Vestiges of the feudal system still remain in Japanese martial arts. And, even up until recently, it was considered taboo to question one's teacher. A unique system of progression has arisen throughout the long history of Japanese traditional learning. Under this system the order of advancement is specified in a detailed manner, from beginning, intermediate, and inner knowledge, to secret hidden knowledge. Since one could not advance until they mastered the problems given to them by their instructors, it was until recently considered proper to obey their instructor, and it would be taken as rude for one to ask questions of one's teacher. It was not uncommon for students to be chastised by their instructors if they asked questions by saying that it is 10 years too early!

Moreover, it was said that "it takes 3 years to master one kata." The notion that the core of practice should be the diligent practice of kata for more than three years has had a large influence on many instructors who have been taught this way.

Part 4 The Organization of Karate

Whereas, originally there was no system of styles in Okinawa karate, the different styles arose around the beginning of the Showa Era (1926). With the setting up of styles, there arose the need to differentiate each from the other and form each style's own identity. That difference essentially meant a difference in katas. Thus it was necessary to rearrange the katas, establishing their own set of katas. Even within the same styles there were differences between the katas taught to the early students and those, which were taught later.

An example that represents this is the Heian katas created by Master Anko Itosu. Introduced less than 100 years ago, there were already numerous variations by the time karate was introduced to the mainland. Master Itosu, himself was responsible for this. Depending on when he taught the katas, the movements differed. Even the same katas taught under Master Itosu were different, resulting in their existence as different styles.

If, at the time the bunkai had been clearly specified, this problem would have been minor, but since it wasn't, the differences in movements were passed on, and led to different styles' katas.

Part 5 Competition

It cannot be denied that one's interest in training is heightened and the level of perfecting katas is raised, thus contributing to the preservation of katas, when competition is the goal. Essentially, this is a good thing, but recently it has led to a trend to rearrange katas. An often quoted example of this is the kata Chatanyara Kushanku. The competition version of this kata is quite different from the original. If this is so, then it would appear that competition also caused some damage to katas.

Also, because it is difficult to win in competition unless they perform high-level katas, beginning students skip the basic katas, and only practice advanced katas. Furthermore, as katas of other styles are performed in tournaments, students are required to perform those katas as well. So the strange reality arises where, not only must one practice one's own bassai, but the bassai katas of other styles in order to compete in tournaments.

The biggest problem with this phenomenon is that in tournaments competitors are not asked whether or not they can use the kata, so they brazenly perform katas for which they do not know the bunkai. Thus we can see that are many reasons to practice katas, which are unusable. By understanding the bunkai, though, we can lessen this problem.

Team kata is a part of kata competition. It is difficult to understand the reason for several people to move in a synchronized manner from a martial arts point of view. Recently, however with the change in the WKF rules, it is necessary perform the bunkai in the finals, sparking an interest in bunkai. This is basically a good trend, I believe.

Section 3 What is Meant by "Styles" ?

"Style" denotes a group arising from technical differences. In kenjutsu different styles, such as Shinkage Ryu, Nen Ryu, and Itto Ryu, have arisen due to philosophical differences among the founders. Therefore, unless there is no change in the body of technical knowledge that style should bear the same name as it is passed down through each generation. To the continuation of the body of technical knowledge, the founder or grand master will approve those instructors who have mastered the body of technical knowledge. The founder or grand master will be the guide for that school.

In large schools, not only the founder or grand master, but other masters are granted the right to certify students, and in some cases, practitioners have come to Edo (Tokyo) to receive their master certification, and returned to their homeland to teach, giving rise to new schools. Unless there is a change in the technical knowledge, though, the style should be the same. They should be thought of as factions within the same style. Thus, the emergence of certain factions (ha) within the same style (ryu) will arise.

In karate, one can observe the peculiar phenomenon whereby two students of the same master may profess to belonging to different styles. This can be attributed to several reasons. Since there is no standard for the qualification of instructors in karate, and also, because the curriculum is unclear, it is understandable that instructors may develop individual interpretations of the technical knowledge. In fact the main reason that karate, unlike judo and kendo, which are moving toward a consensus, is moving toward a splintering is the confusing trend toward the emergence of different factions within the same style.

Also the different factions within karate are not moving apart so much from technical differences as differences in competition rules. The major differences are “non-contact rules”, “protective gear rules”, “full contact rules”, and “glove rules.” The basis for this problem lies in the fact that the rules for karate competition were not clearly defined.

It is clearly known that judo is the creation of Dr. Jigoro Kano, and that its roots are in Jujutsu. There is a vast difference between judo, a martial art that was developed by one person, and karate, which was developed by many persons. With this in mind, I believe it is necessary to redefine what karate is.

Section 4 Consideration of the Changes on the Mainland

Since the teaching of the bunkai for katas was not complete when it was introduced to the mainland, it was necessary to fill in the gaps, since “necessity is the mother of invention.” As a result, karate developed in its own fashion on the mainland, and the gap between kata and kumite widened. I would like to organize the factors responsible for this.

Part 1 The Explanations for Katas Were Not Understood

All of the problems can be solved if one rectifies the causes. Moreover, they are the result of the overlapping of various factors.

Those causes are :

1. The explanations were lost in Okinawa.
2. The explanations weren't passed down in Okinawa.
3. The explanations were passed on only to certain persons.
4. The explanations were passed on to certain persons, but they did not pass them on.

Part 2 The Ideological Difference in the Practice of Karate in Okinawa and the Mainland

I believe there is a significant difference in the attitude toward the practice of kata in Okinawa and on the mainland. Martial arts on the mainland were practiced mainly by two persons paired against each other. Even Iaido is practiced with two people at the advanced level, even though one generally imagines that it is practiced by oneself, as in basic kendo.

In Okinawa, on the other hand, the thinking is the opposite, as characterized by the quote of Sensei Hiroshi Kinjo, that "Kata is a stylization, not the actual technique" in Gekkan Karate Do, and that of Sensei Kiyoshi Arakaki that "there is no value in applying the techniques of katas to kumite or real fighting situations." excerpted from "Karate Sangokushi" Gekkan Karate Do. They believed that through the individual practice of kata one would be able to temper and understand their body movements, and become able to use the katas and apply them to kumite.

It is possible that the masters who introduced karate to the mainland did not understand this difference in ideology, and that difference may actually have contributed to the fact that karate developed in a unique manner on the mainland. Free sparring, may have begun as an adaptation of bunkai kumite on the mainland.

Part 3 Characteristic Differences between Judo and Karate

In the history of the development of judo, one notes that there were confrontations with traditional jujutsu around the beginning of the Meiji period (1868-), with boxing around the Taisho period, and with wrestling around the Showa period (1926-). Also, Kodokan was engaged in a rivalry with the Butokukai of Kyoto, so they established the Traditional Martial Arts Study Association, and encouraged the senior students to study Aikido and Jojutsu.

The martial art, judo, which Dr. Jigoro Kano envisioned was a modern martial art which included overall free sparring practice which included kicks and punches.

Master Gichin Funakoshi's demonstrations in 1916 in Kyoto, and in 1922 in Tokyo were held during this time, so I am sure that they were of great interest. Dr. Kano invited Master Funakoshi to come to the Kodokan and teach karate to his senior students for several months.

Then he went to Okinawa the following year, where he publicized karate, and encouraged Masters Kenwa Mabuni and Chojun Miyagi to go the mainland.

It appears that Dr. Kano considered making karate a part of judo. In 1931 he submitted a report to the ministry of culture entitled "Karate as a Part of Judo."

On the other hand, the major karate masters had hoped to establish karate as one of the

three major martial arts along with judo and kendo. Accordingly, they elected to accentuate its uniqueness in order to keep it independent of judo. It seems that, even though Okinawan karate contained throws and joint techniques, the decision was made to emphasize kicks and punches, in order to distinguish it from judo and traditional jujutsu.

Part 4 Understanding Karate

It is said that Master Funakoshi began the practice of yakusoku kumite (practicing with a partner) around 1929. Apparently, until then everyone only practiced katas or punches against a makiwara. Master Funakoshi had been teaching at the Tokyo University Karate Club since 1926, but the students became dissatisfied with his instruction, and they began their own tournaments using protective gear.

In 1930 Mr. Jisaburo Miki of the Tokyo University Karate Club published a book entitled *An Outline of Kempo*. He wrote that book as an antithesis to Master Funakoshi's method of only teaching kata. Seeking the real thing, Mr. Miki traveled to Okinawa, and studied under the top masters. He was, however, unable to solve his questions. In one chapter, he questions the notion that karate does not include grabs, throws, and holds.

Part 5 Simplification Through Free Kumite

What will happen if we introduce free kumite without any holds, or throws, and only punches, strikes, and kicks? Obviously what will develop will be completely different from the original.

The original purpose of free kumite and kumite matches was to test the techniques that one had learned. One can easily imagine that once the idea of competition enters the picture, the notion of "testing" will change to "winning."

In order to prevent this from happening, sensei Jigoro Kano explained that one must compete in free practice and competition with the "presumption of losing." For if one only concentrates on winning, one will not improve their techniques. This is because at first, one will not be proficient and they will lose often, but if one avoids losing then there will be few chances to test one's techniques and their progress will be impeded as a result.

Furthermore, since advanced techniques are more difficult to use, they will likely be exchanged for simpler techniques, which are easier to use, and the more they are used in competition, the more they are likely to degenerate.

Sensei Kubota commented that "no matter how much I teach certain techniques, if they are not applicable to competition, no one is interested in learning them." I hear similar stories from other schools and styles that if the students cannot use techniques in competition, they show no interest in learning them.

Part 6 The Abundance of Tournaments

There are tournaments where the winner is sometimes decided in overtime for kumite. It is human nature to want to win, as long as one has entered the tournament. One competes within rules, which are in place to guarantee safety. From a judging standpoint, difficult or more complex techniques are given more value.

Long ago, people did not learn karate to compete, rather most people learned in order to become stronger. Also since there were so few competitions, only the very best students were chosen to compete. More and more, in order to win, competitors have begun to utilize their practice time efficiently by practicing only techniques, which are allowed under the rules. As a result, with the number of tournaments increasing, this trend is increasing.

Part 7 The Prevalence of Various Rules

After the war, karate became a competitive sport, influenced by judo and kendo. At that time non-contact and rules using protective equipment became prevalent. Also, the experiment of wearing gloves already existed by 1955. Then in 1965, with the appearance of full contact karate various types of game from come to be held in the karate world.

For all of the different types of competition, the goal was to maintain safety while coming as close as possible to real fighting. Each of these sets of rules, however, had their own advantages and disadvantages. Recently it appears that there has been even further minute differentiation of these rules. Since each of these different types of rules is based on principle of competing safely, many techniques, which are found in kata, have been eliminated. Conversely new techniques, which are effective under certain types of rules, have been developed.

Section 5 Are Practice Methods Effective ?

Part 1 Outside Block as an Example

From my limited experience, it seems that there are many questions about the manner in which karate is taught and practiced, especially compared to judo or kendo. It seems as though the more we contemplate such questions as "what is the correct bunkai for kata?" or "what are the correct stances or postures?" or "what is the relationship between basics and kumite?" the more of a confusing maze we seem to find ourselves in.

When confused, the proper strategy is to return to the beginning. Judo and kendo were preceded by jujitsu and kenjutsu. There are many articles and artifacts, which allow us to research their original basics. In the case of karate, though, there are no written records, and it is not certain whether or not it has been handed down completely, therefore it is difficult to get an idea of its original form.

As I was watching a program on TV about the Athens Olympics, I learned that there are many scientific approaches to training in order to establish new records. In particular, the swimming head coach earned his position essentially based on his analytical skill, and the gymnastics team produced wonderful results with the implementation of organizational measures over the last 20 years. Judo, under a plan proposed 20 years ago by Coach Yamashita sent children to compete abroad to gain international experience. Those children achieved exceptional results at this Olympics. Already, we can see that it is extremely difficult to set a world record at the Olympics solely through individual based efforts.

Recently, many books have been published which relate the shintai soua of traditional martial arts to sports. In one of these that dealt with namba running (the traditional style of running in Japan whereby the same arm and leg are used together) it was written that, due to an error in translation, the Japanese were taught to run incorrectly. Upon reading this I strongly felt the need to research such issues as they relate to karate. There are many technical books on sports other than those in the Olympics, such as golf and baseball, in bookstores.

In comparison, it is true that there is not as much activity in the field of karate. When we think of a scientific approach in karate we usually come up with tests to measure the force of a punch or kick. I am sure that are other sports oriented theories, but if we take a diversified approach to the technical aspects and instruction methods, then it may be possible for karate to flourish again. As karate advances with the Olympics in its field of vision, varied scientific research is bound to take place.

Is the manner in which karate is practiced efficient ?

Let us return to the topic. I have doubts whether the training methods, which were created after karate was introduced to the mainland, are effective. In the case of kata bunkai, if we look at each bunkai, it is possible to come up with something completely different, even if it is for the same kata.

The training method consisting of basics, moving basics, kata, one-step sparring, and free sparring, was said to have been created by Master Kentsu Yabu, and established after the introduction of karate to the mainland. Compared to other martial arts, karate has a relatively short history and it perhaps has not stood the test of critical analysis.

I would like to take a careful look at one example. Of the basic techniques ; punches, strikes, kicks and blocks, while punches, strikes, and kicks are used effectively in competitive kumite, when it comes to blocks, it is not possible to say that the movements that we learn in basics and kata are effectively utilized. In particular, let's take a look at soto uke (Shotokan terminology). As an exercise, let's look at various hypotheses, which would explain why a soto uke cannot be used in kumite.



Premise

- 1 : The unusable technique was passed down incorrectly**
- 2 : Insufficient practice**
- 3 : Incorrect usage**

Proof

1 : The unusable technique was passed down incorrectly

Since the same technique is found in many other styles, including Okinawan styles, the possibility of soto uke itself being incorrectly passed down is not likely. Next, one may imagine that the technique was incorrectly named, and that soto uke is not really a block. It is easy to imagine that the real purpose of a soto uke is to take out an opponent's elbow joint.

However, in master Choki Motobu's "Kumite Technical Manual" soto uke is paired with a reverse punch, thus we can assume that soto uke is indeed a block.

2 : Insufficient Practice

In practice, soto uke is primarily used in yakusoku kumite, and it is difficult to use in free sparring. Whether or not the amount of practice is insufficient, or whether the technique itself is so difficult that one tends not to practice it, is like asking which came first, the chicken or the egg. The result, though, has been influenced by both.

If, on the one hand, one increases the amount of practice and the movement in its basic form does not afford a difference in ability, then it is essentially unusable. Thus, I believe that it is not just a simple matter of practice time.

3 : Incorrect Usage

In shotokan's 20 principles, there is an article, which states that "kata should be correct, and actual fighting is a different thing." If one takes that literally, in actual fighting, it is okay not to use the exact technique in its basic form.

Moreover, since it is true that kata is a stylization of kata, in actual kumite one can use it (soto uke) if it is used as a parry with the bottom of the fist to the inside. Therefore, one can see that there is no problem if it is used as a basic movement. I believe this is satisfactory to most people.

Is that Really True ?

Why don't we, however, take it a step further and examine whether this is really acceptable. Let's approach it from a different angle, looking at the differences between kata and kumite.

The major differences are :

- In kata, soto uke is performed moving forward. (Photograph 1, 2)
- In kumite, soto uke is performed moving backwards. (Photograph 3, 4)

Thus, the difference is in the forward and backward movement.



Photograph 1



Photograph 2



Photograph 3



Photograph 4

Unlike kata, it is impractical to move forward when blocking in yakusoku kumite. This is because, since the attacker is moving forward, if the defender moved forward, as well, the distance would be too short and the technique could not be executed.

(Photograph 6, 7)



Photograph 6



Photograph 7

Therefore, in order to maintain the correct distance in yakusoku kumite, the defender needs to take a step backwards when performing a soto uke. (Photograph 3, 4, 5)



Photograph 3



Photograph 4



Photograph 5

If one blocks while stepping back, though, the attacker will not be taken off balance, so they will be able to attack again. As an example, if an opponent attacks with only a straight punch, then it is just like three-step or five-step sparring.

Furthermore, if the opponent throws a one-two combination attack, then the possibility of the second punch being faster than the defender's block and counter punch is high. (Photograph 8, 9, 10)



Photograph 8



Photograph 9



Photograph 10

If that is the case then why do we even practice it?

From the above, we see that whether retreating or advancing, the soto uke is not effective. The question is "what can one do to use it effectively?" Let's look at the following experiments in an attempt to solve this problem.

1 : Perform a Soto Uke Stepping Forward as in the Kata

Try to do this by doubling the starting distance, and both the attacker and defender step in and block.

In this experiment, we found that the opponent is thrown off balance. It is not realistic, however, for both to step forward. This is because the attacker would not initiate a straight punch that would not reach, and a defender would not purposely step in to block a punch that would not reach. (Photograph 11, 12)



Photograph 11



Photograph 12

2 : Add a Switch Step

A switch step has been added to maintain a realistic distance. With a switch step, if one steps in half a step, and steps back half a step, from a visual perspective, it creates the situation as stepping in. Also, the entire body weight can be applied to the block, making the block stronger. If one blocks in such a manner, the opponent's posture will be thrown off balance, and they will not be able to deliver a one-two attack, and the defender can counter with a reverse punch. (Photograph 13, 14, 15)



Photograph 13



Photograph 14



Photograph 15

3 : Why is the Opponent's Posture Thrown off Balance ?



Photograph 16



Photograph 17



Photograph 18



Photograph 19



Photograph 20

A fist in karate is typically made by clenching the first and second fingers with the thumb tightly around them. (Photograph 18)

In this state it is easy to move the opponent's arm along the plane in the Photograph. (Photograph 19, 20) (ref. photograph 16 and 17)

In other words, when an opponent attacks with a left straight punch, it will be easy to take the attack off balance when moving backwards diagonally to the right. Therefore to defend against this attack, the defender should perform a soto uke while stepping backwards diagonally to the right. In this case, the opponent will be thrown off balance. (Photograph 11, 12)

From the above experiments, we can see that in yakusoku kumite if a soto uke is performed while stepping back, the opponent will not be thrown off balance. Therefore, if an opponent uses a one-two attack, stepping back and performing a soto uke and counter reverse punch is not realistic. (Photograph 8, 9, 10)

When the One - two Attack is a Feint

What would happen if the one-two attack is a feint? In that instance, if one performs a junzuki (kizami zuki) with the front hand after performing a soto uke, there is a likely possibility of it getting in before the opponent's reverse punch. Sensei Choki Motobu said that "blocks must also be attacks." It is possible to recreate this.

Examination of Written Records

In support of the above hypothesis sensei Choki Motobu said that, "In true Okinawan karate combination punches are not possible." That is because in true Okinawan karate, if a block is performed properly, the opponent would not be able to initiate another punch. In photographs of kumite left by sensei Motobu we can see numerous instances where he is using a soto uke. In all of these photographs they are using a half step forward.

Sensei Kubota's Kumite

Sensei Kubota's kumite can perhaps be characterized by many techniques, which attempt to move around to the back one's opponent. When asked in what manner one could move around to one's opponents back, sensei replied, "You must bump in to them." This conversation seems like a Zen riddle, but if we keep it in mind, we can understand the explanation that if one blocks while moving forward, they will unbalance their opponent, and then turn them around so one can attack their back.

The Results of Testing the Premise

According to the above tests, the result is that the movement of the block is not incorrect. Rather, the movement of the feet is incorrect. Since these tests have not been applied to all situations, they are nothing more than test results of one hypothesis. These results do not necessarily prove that the method of practicing yakusoku kumite is incorrect.

It is quite obvious, though, that there is a need to evaluate it from various angles. Here, I have introduced one notion based on an idea from sensei Nagata's concepts. From this time forward, many old techniques are sure to be reevaluated and modernized by many people.

Part 2 The Divergence of Free Kumite and Kata

In his book entitled "Koubou Kempo Karatedo Nyumon", Master Kenwa Mabuni explained the relationship between kata and kumite by saying that the purpose of kumite is for the practical application of kata. Currently, though, kata and kumite have developed into separate entities. In Master Gichin Funakoshi's 20 principles, it says that "kata should be performed correctly and that actual fighting was different." I believe that this has been misconstrued by some to mean that kata and actual fighting are completely different. His real intent was that kata should not be used in its actual form, but rather, it should be adapted to fit the situation in actual fighting. Because the application of kata is not clear, problems arise where the techniques of kata cannot be used in kumite. Thus kata and kumite have developed in separate directions.

In judo, dangerous techniques such as punches, kicks and reverse techniques are not allowed in competition, but are practiced in kata. In karate, however, punches, and kicks, which are considered dangerous in judo, are the mainstay of karate, so they must be used in competition, making it difficult to differentiate between competition and kata.

Judo : kata=dangerous techniques

Karate : kata= ?

From the above we see that the guidelines for kata are not clearly defined. Furthermore, since the application of kata is unclear, the trend has leaned toward stylized esthetics and very solid stances in an effort to show strength. Kumite, on the other hand has seen the need to adopt a different means of footwork in order to win.

Kata : solid stances

Kumite : light / quick footwork

One can see at a glance that the methods of practice will conflict. Because of this there are many kumite competitors who do not practice kata at all. This will obviously cause more and more confusion in the karate world.

Part 3 Karate and Okinawan Kobudo

In Okinawa Ryukyu Kobudo has been passed down in the same manner as Okinawan karate. On the mainland karate was introduced as a superior empty-handed method of fighting. It developed primarily within the framework of kumite and kata competition after WWII. Ryukyu Kobudo, on the other hand has not gained popularity in dojos in Japan. Of those practicing it, Sensei Kenshin Taira of the Ryukyu Kobudo preservation association is the foremost instructor. This trend has come about after the Showa period. Originally, it is said that Bo and Sai were used by the samurai class and the tonfa and kama (sickle) were practiced by the common people. It appears that Ryukyu Kobudo is commonly taught in dojos abroad. Whether this is because American servicemen, who served on bases in Okinawa, could learn directly from Okinawan masters, or whether there was more of an interest in the self-defense aspect, the interest level for weapons was high. Since both disciplines were developed simultaneously, it is best to learn both. Recently it has become possible to make special weapons using polyurethane, or rubber tubing together with lightweight protective gear enabling the possibility of weapons competition like some kind of samurai sport.

Section 6 Is Karate Incomplete ?

From what we have examined thus far, while it is only a hypothesis, we can see that as a school of martial arts, karate was passed down incompletely.

Compared to other martial arts of the mainland :

- 1 : It has been passed down unclearly.
- 2 : The application of kata is unclear.
- 3 : The system for advancement is unclear.

Part 1 Bunkai has been Passed Down Incompletely

It is not clear who created many of the katas in karate. Oral tradition states that many katas were taught by Chinese teachers. The names have been passed down orally, but there remain few written records. The pronunciation indicates that they are essentially Chinese. The manner in which, and to what degree martial arts were taught by Chinese and to what degree they changed in Okinawa is absolutely unclear. Even the relatively new Heian katas, made by master Itosu in the Meiji period, are thought to be based on a kata called Channan, taught to him by a Chinese by the same name. Furthermore, since it was common to learn different katas from different teachers who specialized in particular katas, such as Naihanchi from A sensei, and Passai from B sensei, Okinawan karate was more of an individualized discipline. I look forward to further study in this area.

Part 2 The Application of Kata is Unclear

Previously I have touched on the fact that the application of kata is unclear. It is inconceivable though, in other martial arts, that the method of application could be unclear. The whole purpose of learning a martial art is to learn how to apply its techniques in a real situation. We know that the use of kata as a method of practice came from Chinese martial arts. Merely studying kata, however, is not the same as studying martial arts. It is only when one studies the application of techniques that one can say that they have begun to learn. Certainly other methods of practice, as well as methods involving weapons, are necessary. The departure point for martial arts, though, is the study of the application of the techniques. If one is not taught application, the techniques will not function as a martial art. What can one hope to gain from ineffective study year after year ?

Master Anko Itosu, the creator of the Heian katas, wrote in his 10 principles in 1908 that "one should learn each movement in a kata, making sure of their application before practicing that kata." From this statement, we know that the application did exist in Itosu's time, and it is unacceptable that the application of katas is unclear today.

Part 3 Method of Advancement is Unclear

In the Shuri style of Okinawan karate, before the creation of the Heian katas it was common to learn Naihanchi and Passai or Kushanku. There was no specific order after Naihanchi, and as previously stated, it was customary to study under different teachers, so the system of advancement through novice, intermediate, and advanced levels as in other schools of martial arts on the mainland was unclear. Since the system of advancement was unclear, there was also no certification system, nor was there a clearly defined teaching curriculum. Under these conditions it is very difficult to get a full picture of the technical body of knowledge.

In those styles which have a historical background, one can see attempts to establish a system of advancement in ranking, since there was a need to establish a successor. In Chinese martial arts, which were the forerunners to Okinawan karate, there existed no training methodology. The creation of the Heian katas by Itosu was an attempt to introduce a system of advancement. From Heian 1 to Heian 5, they progress in order of difficulty. In his 10 principles, Itosu stated that "one should be able to advance to an advanced level in 2 to 3 years," so we know that there was a method for practice at that time. Unfortunately, though, since the methodology is unclear, it is difficult to measure the results.

Chapter 3

Questions Facing Karate

Section 1 The Reason that Katas are Unusable

Reviewing the issues which we have looked at up to this point, we come up with these three points :

1. The bunkai for katas is not understood.
2. Bunkai cannot be used within the rules of competition. (In Japan)
3. It is possible to win using only simple techniques.

Part 1 The Bunkai for Katas is Not Understood

This is because it was not possible to introduce Okinawan karate in its original form to the mainland. It appears that until now no specialized research has been carried out concerning the fact that kata bunkai is unclear. "An Instructional Text for Karate," published by the Japan Karate Federation is the only book about the bunkai for the Heian katas. It states in its preface, however, that "this training manual is not about the original combat aspects of karate ; rather it maintains the educational standpoint of competitive sports based on the rule of mutual respect." Since that publication, no other works dealing with the martial aspect of bunkai has been published.

Recently WKF competition rules require the study of bunkai. I believe that, as the study of bunkai advances, the interest in using different techniques will increase.

Part 2 Bunkai Cannot be Used in Competition

Karate was introduced to the mainland primarily as a martial art consisting of kicking, punching, and striking. According to "Explaining Kempo," published by the Todai Karate Research Society, "There is nothing else in karate except kicks, punches, and strikes." Accordingly, many competition rules prohibit grabbing. World Karate Federation rules, however, permit grabs under a few seconds and throws are used aggressively. There appears to be an overall trend to return to the basics.

Part 3 It is Possible to Win Using Only Simple Techniques

Currently, since most kumite competitions are won mainly by kicks and punches, emphasis is put on perfecting fairly easy techniques. It is a fact that it is better to practice fewer simple techniques, which are easy to use in tournaments. One can also not deny the trend to practice techniques, which are rewarded higher points according to WKF rules. Consequently, as the number of tournaments increases, the tendency to practice only techniques for use in competition will become stronger. Indeed, if one doesn't, it will become more and more difficult to win.

Section 2 How to be Able to Use Katas ?

Part 1 The Definition of Bunkai

Because Okinawan karate was taught in secret to a small number of disciples, there is nothing similar to a textbook explaining the movements of katas. Currently, it is common practice to practice katas without knowing the meaning behind the movements.

Learning a martial art involves learning the techniques, which have been passed down through that particular martial art. In the case of karate, though, bunkai for katas (the body of traditional techniques) is mysteriously unclear. To practice katas individually after one has learned the application of the techniques is meaningful, but merely the individual practice of a kata without knowing the application, is like performing a dance or gymnastics.

On one hand it has been stated that “katas should not be changed.” In fact, though, katas had already undergone changes before Okinawan karate was introduced to the mainland. The fact that a person’s name has been attached to a different katas, such as “such and such a” bassai, or “such and such a” Kushanku, itself proves that katas had undergone change from their original form. If katas changed from their original forms, then it follows that their bunkai changed too. Thus, we see that the problem lies not in the changes of simple movements, but in changes in the techniques themselves.

Recently one hears stories where people imitate winning katas, which have been arranged (changed) in order to win. If that is true, then katas will continue to change more and more. Since the standard for winning in tournaments is whether or not the kata is strong and beautiful, not whether or not it is applicable, this phenomenon will increase.

In the case of other martial arts on the mainland, katas are traditionally practiced by two people, and there are written texts, which contain the techniques being practiced, so even though there may be differences in the outward appearance, there are no major differences. Therefore I believe that it is impossible to correctly teach kata unless it is taught together with bunkai, working with two people. Consequently, I believe that kata texts should not just describe the sequence of moves, but should include an explanation of the bunkai of the kata.

Part 2 The Need for a System of Advancement in Rank

In addition to learning bunkai, it is also necessary to introduce into karate a systematic method of advancement with regard to the mastering of techniques and advancing in rank. In schools of martial arts on the mainland, there is a framework within which the transmission of techniques occurs. This system begins with “shoden” novice, to “chuden” intermediate, and to “okuden” advanced. This system was developed in the Edo period when it was customary to pass on the set of skills to one child. It was not possible to

guarantee, though, that a suitable successor would be born into one's family, so the head of the family would choose a successor and teach him the body of knowledge.

Recently there are many books and videos about body mechanics. Some of them relate the style of movement of top Olympic athletes to the body mechanics of traditional martial arts. One gets a sense of the systematic method that Dr. Kano had in mind when he decided to introduce the basic technique of breaking the opponent's balance as the first technique to learn in the syllabus of judo.

In traditional Japanese arts the curriculum advances in a prescribed way. Karate, on the other hand, has not established the same unified system for advancement, and there are many questions, which arise, such as : How can one use the katas, which are the accumulation of the technical knowledge? Where does the practice of kata fit in to the overall curriculum? What is the relationship between basics, kata and kumite?

The order that was proposed by sensei Kentsu Yabu ; basics, moving basics, one-step sparring, kata, and kumite is sufficient for general purposes, but I do not believe it is sufficient for the advancement of higher level students.

Part 3 The Need for Logical Rules for Technical Advancement

Because of the need to practice specifically for tournaments, there is a trend toward not practicing or studying those techniques, which cannot be used in tournaments. In martial arts, it is necessary to test one's strength against another. Apart from that, there is a need to have rules, which evaluate the degree to which one has mastered the techniques, which they have learned. In karate, as well, it is necessary to create a situation where one must use specified techniques in order to win. If the rules require the use of bunkai for katas, then the need to practice bunkai will arise.

If, for example, one must master certain work skills in order to make a living, they would desperately learn that skill. If one purposely creates the condition where a technique must be used, then the techniques, which are appropriate to that situation, will be practiced and improved upon. There was an article in the magazine Gekkan Karatedo about free sparring in Goju Ryu. I believe the system whereby one's ability is judged by how well they use the techniques, which are in the Goju Ryu's katas, is an extremely good system. If the method in this example is used more often, then the connection between kumite and kata will be strengthened, and the level of karate will be raised.

Section 3 Karate as a Means of Self Defense

I believe that more research is necessary in this area, since karate was originally developed as a means of self-defense. One can also imagine that the interest in self-defense among the general public is heightened these days due to the recent worsening of public safety. I believe it is also one of the duties of martial arts to respond to the needs of such

people. For the purposes of self-defense, it is necessary to teach the technical ability to fight off an attacker when the need arises. The need to fight an attacker must be available now, not in 10 to 20 years. In other words, the content must be such that one can use those techniques which they have been taught, or to the extent to which they have practiced them. In that sense, if one learns only one kata, and they practice it so that they will be able to use it, they should be able to apply it to a self-defense situation.

Of course there is a world of difference between knowing a technique and being able to use it. Let's take the example of the over-the-back throw of judo. Much practice is required to use it effectively. Even though one trains every day with a partner and then does free style practice, it will be quite some time before one can actually throw an opponent. With this in mind, one can understand the fact that masters of old did not learn a great number of katas.

Heian Shodan, for example, is made up of 5 different combinations of techniques ; gedan barai (down block), oizuki (straight punch) as a defense against a chudan zuki (mid section punch) and mae geri (front kick), kentsui (hammer fist), and oizuki, as an escape from a hold, a jodan age uke (upper block) as a defense against a jodan (face) attack, and a shuto uke (knife hand block) as a defense against a chudan attack and throw. If one were able to learn these techniques alone and be able to apply them, they should be able to defend themselves using those techniques. Additionally if one studies the use of weapons, one will learn how to defend oneself using objects close at hand.

Chapter 4

Consideration of Kata

Section 1 What is Kata ?

Part 1 Is a Kata Merely a String of Basic Techniques ?

It appears that the understanding of kata in modern karate is that it consists of basic techniques strung together. According to bunkai kumite, which has been passed down by a master, one can see that techniques consist of various complex movements. A movement that is called a block is not necessarily expressed as a block. Therefore even if one can perform the basic techniques such as punches, kicks, and blocks separately, a kata is not just made up of those individual techniques. "A whole is not a gathering of its parts ; rather it is a union of its parts." For instance let's take a jigsaw puzzle. At first, all of the pieces are in a box or a can. At that point, all of the pieces are separate, and one cannot see the picture or photograph. They are only physically together in one place. That is the condition that the pieces are simply "gathered" together. In order to complete the photograph or picture, the pieces must be put together in their correct positions. By doing so, the picture or photograph is completed. This is the condition where the parts are "united" to form a whole. Accordingly, if one just removes individual techniques from a kata, such as punches, kicks, and blocks, they alone will not be able to express the original intended meaning. It is through the learning of how to put the techniques together that one can understand the application and recreate the original meaning of that kata. So we can see that no matter how much one practices the basic techniques, they will not be able to grasp the essence of the kata.

Part 2 A Means to Record Offensive and Defensive Techniques

Katas were created to record techniques. In the case of martial arts, each technique is recorded as a kata. There are written records of the steps and explanations for these katas. Okinawan karate was influenced by Chinese martial arts and employed as a means of training the practice of arranging numerous techniques in one kata. A close friend told me an interesting example relating to this. He said that it is easier to learn individual vocabulary when learning them with a melody, as in a song. If one learns katas by actually performing them, there will be no need for texts.

Part 3 Be Handed Down from Parson to Parson

The purpose of katas is to transmit the knowledge to the next generation. To learn a kata is to learn that kata's techniques, so the idea that one knows the kata but not its application is, to the rational mind, impossible. Accordingly, if one learns a kata, but hasn't been taught the application of the techniques, then one cannot say that they have learned the kata. The masters who created the katas of course knew the meaning of the techniques and left a tool by means, which future generations could recreate the moves of the kata. That tool is the oral instruction of bunkai. Master Anko Itosu, in his "Ten Principles", said that "one must understand the meaning before practicing. Also, the real usage is often explained orally." As Master Itosu wrote, katas have been handed down

together with an oral explanation of the bunkai, and the reason this has not been passed down is that many instructors themselves have not been taught.

Part 4 Training

When one speaks of training there is a tendency to interpret it as referring to physical training. In Japanese, the word “kiso” (foundation) is related to the word “kisotairyoku” (fundamental physical strength). I believe the general conception is to equate “kiso” with “stamina”, and “training” with “power.”

Here, I will use the word training to refer to the effort to learn how to use proper body mechanics, which is the foundation for use of techniques.

Through the practice of katas and their bunkai, one can learn the dynamics of proper body mechanics in the process of perfecting these techniques. As this knowledge, then, is passed down through several generations, a certain amount of techniques are amassed and the terms “tips” and “points” undergo a linguistic transformation, and individual techniques become and independent technique. Understanding these various techniques is useful in hastening ones advancement in karate. Therefore, without the knowledge of bunkai, it is very difficult to understand proper body mechanics as it relates to karate.

Moreover, one can imagine that the reason one should begin practicing simple katas like Naihanchi and Seishan for three years, is because the simpler the kata, the easier it is to master the techniques. Another way to look at it is that the purpose of practicing these katas is to create correct body mechanics for the practice of karate. This information, as with the bunkai and kata, has been passed down orally.

Section 2 Kumite Makes Katas Useable

Today, kata and kumite are two separate entities in competition. Originally, though, the purpose of kumite must have been to be able to use katas. The key to that was the application of the katas, or bunkai kumite. Unfortunately, though, much of that has not been handed down or lost. The proper order to practice was to first understand the bunkai kumite, and then after one has thoroughly practiced a kata individually, begin to practice kumite with a partner. In this progression the practice of kumite enables the use of katas.

In “Okinawan Karate Gai Setsu”, Master Kentsu Yabu states that Master Sokon Matsumura practiced kumite with a partner. Today, however, much of the bunkai kumite that one sees is for beginners, and as similar to the kirikaeshi in kendo, and it is not the real bunkai for katas. Regarding the assertion that, “If one practices a kata for many years, they will be able to understand it by themselves.” It may be true in some instances, but the odds of that are slim, and there is the danger of losing many techniques to future generations. More than anything, though, if one were generally able to learn by one self, then they would not require teachers. Furthermore, if, for example, one were supposed to

learn independently, then all of the practitioners of karate from its introduction about 100 years ago to the present should be able use katas. The bunkai of kata is fundamentally meant to be learned along with the oral tradition from one's teacher. No matter how much of a genius one is ; katas, which are the accumulation of the wisdom of generations of the masters, are not that simple as to be solved through only one lifetime of practice. I believe that the biggest challenge facing us is to begin to organically connect katas with kumite through the understanding of bunkai.

Section 3 Kumite Did Exist

Part 1 Kumite Did Exist Part 1

Historically speaking with regard to karate, the common explanation is that long ago the individual practice of kata was the principle method of practice, and that kumite was not practiced, rather the practice of challenge matches akin to fights was common. Is that really true? Could martial arts training really have been complete with just the practice of kata? Did they just suddenly go from kata and use the techniques in real combat situations? Were all karate practitioners a bunch of thugs who roamed the streets looking for fights anytime they saw someone who looked strong?

If someone began learning karate, only practicing kata and hitting a makiwara at their dojo, or at home, and then went out to town selling karate through challenge matches, like some kind of street fighter, what would people think? That seems pretty strange, actually when we think about it.

Since karate is stylized, one must understand the actual bunkai kumite, because there are many movements, which are not obvious from the outward appearance. Naihanchi is a truly representative example of this.

Even if one were to practice Naihanchi for 3 to 5 years, could one truly use the techniques in a real fight?

Since the practice of challenge matches was practiced secretly, if one were to just diligently practice kata as one was instructed by one's master, it would have been insufficient as a martial art.

So we see that when we carefully examine these commonly held notions we are left with many questions and doubts.

I will cite several pieces of circumstantial evidence to support my premise that they are incorrect.

No. 1 : In Chinese martial arts, which is the basis for Okinawan karate, in addition to the practice of kata by oneself, there is a method of practice with a partner.

No. 2 : In 1867, at a demonstration for the Chinese envoy kumite using weapons as well as

bare hands was performed.

- No. 3 : Since Master Sokon Matsumura of Shuri style karate was quite talented at Jigen Ryu swordsmanship, it is only natural that he was familiar with the fighting forms of swordsmanship.
- No. 4 : It is said that Master Kosaku Matsumora of Tomari style karate learned kumite from his instructor.
- No. 5 : In 1905 Master Chomo Hanashiro, a student of Itosu, wrote a handwritten book entitled Karate Kumite. It indicated that kumite was a part of karate.
- No. 6 : It is said that when Master Itosu made the Heian katas, his partner was Master Chomo Hanashiro. So, at least for the Heian katas, bunkai kumite existed from the beginning.
- No. 7 : In Goju ryu and Uechi Ryu there is a method of practice involving 2 persons, called "kakete."
- No. 8 : There is photographs of Master Chojun Miyagi, the founder of Goju Ryu practicing kumite when he was young, and also instructing his students in kumite.
- No. 9 : There is a photograph of Master Chotoku Kiyama and a student facing each other in a fighting stance.
- No. 10 : I have heard stories of sensei Kubota practicing kumite with master Funakoshi.

There is more that I can add, but in terms of circumstantial evidence, I believe this is sufficient. I believe this evidence points to the existence of kumite.

In Master Funakoshi's Karate as My Way of Life it nowhere states that he practiced kumite. Rather, he stresses the practice of katas individually. It is likely that because of the "secret pact" of which I heard about from sensei Kubota, he did not write about kumite.

Part 2 Kumite Did Exist Part 2

The first person to introduce kumite to the mainland was Master Choki Motobu. In his book entitled My Okinawan Karate there is a section called "kumite." The gist of that book was that in Okinawan karate, both basics (kata) and kumite existed. In that book, however, it did not specify how to do it, but it could be practiced after learning basic kata, as a kind of "uke hazushi" (blocking and countering). So it was something like bunkai kumite, or ippon kumite. Also, there that is evidence that the term "kumite" existed apart from teachings from individual teachers.

Part 3 Kumite Did Exist Part 3

In Kempo Gai Setsu (Published in 1930) by Jisaburo Miki and Mizuho Takada, there is an interview entitled "The Distinguished master and Experts of Ryukyu." In it some of the masters who were considered distinguished at the time were interviewed. The following excerpt touches on kumite.

Sensei Kentsu Yabu Yamakawa cho, Shuri shi

Currently he is teaching at the Instructors School. He has also spent some ten years in America giving lectures on Okinawa Kempo at various seminars throughout the United States, as well as taking challenge matches to show karate's true power. His serious efforts undoubtedly gave birth to many American karate students. He has not only been a close friend, but he has trained for many years with sensei Choki Motobu, but his main objective has been actual fighting. In his youth, he frequently fought matches and challenged other dojos on occasion. He said that his method of training is to engage in serious practice sparring matches with Master Matsumura (Yabu's instructor) after practicing kata 3 or 4 times, without the use of protective gear. I was able to gain valuable insight into his method of offense and defense.

Master Kentsu Yabe is known as a student of Master Anko Itosu, but he was originally a student of master Sokon Matsumura and apparently he was a fellow student of Master Itosu. From the above article, we see that master Yabu, a student of Master Itosu, spent more time on practicing with a partner than individual kata work. By the way, there is a photograph of Master Yabu engaging in kumite with Mr. Miki, who is wearing protective gear. (Photograph 21)



Photograph 21

Section 4 Consideration of Heian Katas

It is said that Master Anko Itosu (1830-1915), the father of the revival of Shuri Te, introduced the Heian katas and used them as a part of the curriculum in schools in 1904. The popular belief is that master Itosu used an existing kata, removed the dangerous moves and created a new set of katas for the purpose of teaching karate in physical

education courses in public schools. Recently they have become widely used as beginning katas, and often used only for promotion test, but they are rarely used after one puts on a black belt. I would like to take a look at the Heian katas in the following manner.

Part 1 The Historical Background When the Heian Katas were Created

I found a website which investigates the opinions on the mainland concerning the movement to introduce martial arts into the educational curriculum in the Meiji period. This is comparable to the period when Master Anko Itosu introduced karate into the school education in Okinawa. The following is an excerpt from the Kenshido website, which I have permission to quote. (<http://www.namiashi.com/Kenshido>)

Also, in the case of Kendo, which had fallen into decline after the Meiji Restoration, there was a heightened movement to start kendo in the public schools around the early 1880's. The Ministry of Education began an investigation into whether martial arts were appropriate for introduction in to public schools, in response to petitions to do so from the civilian sector. In 1883 the Ministry of Education charged the National Gymnastics Institute with carrying out the investigation. While recognizing its physical and mental merits, it was deemed inappropriate because it would be difficult to teach as a regular course due its dangerous and violent nature, and its insanitariness.

After the Japan- China War of 1893 and 1894, with the establishment of the Dai Nippon Butokukai, and the increase in popularity in Kodokan's judo, the day to day interest among the general population was high.

In 1896 the Ministry advised the same Institute to investigate the merits of including kendo and judo in the public schools. They gave the same answer as before, that martial arts were inappropriate as a regular subject. In 1904 the Committee for Gymnastics and Recreation was established. After meeting 37 times, it too, concluded in a report that mainly from the standpoint of its growth and development, and the fact that was inadequate research into its method of instruction, it should be denied introduction as a regular subject.

After that the movement to allow kendo to be introduced as a regular course continued to be taken up in committee, and the "Proposal for Physical Education" was submitted and approved. Even then, though, the Ministry did not move on it, and finally the proposal was recognized but martial arts did not become a regular course, rather in fact a mere elective.

So, we see that it took over 30 years for a martial art, which began in the early 1880's to bear fruit. I can cite various reasons for this, including the lack of equipment, the lack of facilities, and the dearth of qualified instructors, but perhaps the biggest reason was the fact that there was no clear method of instruction.

In 1908 the final proposal to introduce martial arts as a regular course was approved in the

Diet. After that there were changes in the regulations of the Ministry of Education, and in 1911 the "Ordinances and Regulations For Normal and Junior High Schools" was made public. At that time kendo developed as a regular course in physical education.

As we see from the above, it took 30 years for the Ministry of Education to decide whether or not to introduce martial arts into the education curriculum. It is important to note that, even in the case of kendo and judo, they were passed over because they did not have a reliable method of teaching.

Let's take a look at Master Itosu's activity around that same time. In 1901 he taught karate at Shuri Elementary School. In 1904 he introduced the Heian katas. 1905 he taught at the Dai Ichi Jr. high School and normal School. In 1908 He submitted the "10 Principles" for the practice of karate to the Prefecture Office. When he submitted his "10 Principles" it was during the above historical background as a reply to the investigation of the Prefecture Office. Of course, the Okinawan Prefecture office was aware of the activities of the Ministry of Education, as well as the rise in popularity of Kodokan judo, and kendo.

Part 2 The Intent of Itosu's "10 principles"

In his "10 Principles" he used such phrases as, "one person against ten opponents" and "a useful part of a militaristic society." Such phrases make it clear that he viewed karate as a martial art, with a philosophy, which was the opposite of modern day sports.

When the "10 Principles" was written, Japan had just ended the Japan-China War (1888-1895) and the Russo-Japan War (1904-1905), and the trend toward creating a prosperous and militaristic country was growing daily. Also, when Master Itosu submitted his petition to have karate introduced into the public schools, the governor of Okinawa was reported to have said that "if the training in karate is so effective for the realizing the confidence of body and mind of soldiers, we should recognize its value, and for the encouragement of the youth of the prefecture, it should be adopted as a part of the physical education program immediately." Master Itosu, who submitted the proposal, and the Governor, who approved it, both recognized the value of a militaristic education.

Part 3 The Characteristics of the Heian Katas

The characteristics were, as Master Itosu wrote, "They were designed so that one could advance through them in a short time. And they can be used for a quick attack, and the application must be transmitted orally." As we saw earlier, in order to successfully introduce karate into the public schools, it was essential to establish a method of instruction. Until that time the most common way to learn karate was to learn Naihanchi from such and such an instructor, then learn Passai from another instructor, and so on, learning from various instructors. It is believed that Master Itosu created the Heian katas because he felt it was necessary to educate instructors, and create a system to facilitate the spread of karate. The terms "shodan" and "nidan" are the same used in the Jigen style of swordsmanship to denote the order of steps. Thus they were created with the idea of

advancing step by step. He said that if one were to train 2 to 3 hours per day for 3 to 4 years, one would possibly be able to understand the hidden parts of the katas. It is also believed that the Heian katas were made with a great deal of consideration to the effectiveness as an immediate means of self-defense, without lowering the traditional technical level. Also, since in olden times it was common for karate practitioners to know only 2 to 3 different katas, he believed it necessary to use the technical framework from many different katas order not lower the overall technical level. Therefore it can be said that the Heian katas embody the essence of Shuri Te

Part 4 Are They Simply Beginning Katas With Dangerous Techniques Removed ?

The common notion is that Master Itosu removed the dangerous techniques to make the Heian katas appropriate for the public school education in physical education. Is this really true, though? In his "10 principles" he wrote that "It (karate) is extremely appropriate for soldiers" and that "Some students will be able to learn the inner secrets in 3 to 4 years." In other words he was training the ability to respond immediately in a combat situation. For example, if one were to create a new kata, would one create something that was unusable as a sport-like version that his students would unable to use? I think one would create a kata which is easier to learn, and is more effective. In Itosu's "10 principles" he wrote that "There are many oral teachings concerning the application." This indicates that there were oral teachings concerning the Heian katas. Thus there is the possibility that the Heian katas were created in such a way that they were not effective without the oral teachings that were meant to accompany them. In reality the oral teachings, which I learned from Sensei Kubota about the Heian katas' bunkai are simple, but are amply effective and they included dangerous techniques.

Part 5 What are Dangerous Techniques ?

Generally speaking, "dangerous techniques" are considered eye gouges, and groin kicks. These are stipulated as prohibited techniques in many combat sports.

But, were those techniques really removed from karate and the Heian katas? If we look at the writings of masters Funakoshi and Mabuni, we see that they included groin kicks, and nukite. In "Kempo Karate" published in the year 1933, the explanation for a front kick is that it is a groin kick. Additionally in the book "Karatedo Taikan" (Genwa Nakasone), which was written to introduce karate to elementary school students, groin kicks are included. So, from these examples, one can conclude that the idea that dangerous techniques were excluded is impossible. There exists the explanation that groin kicks were changed to front kicks. Anyone, however, can change a front kick to a groin kick. Plus, there is also a groin kick where you kick up with the instep. So, I think the basis for that explanation is weak. It has also been said that the face punch was changed to a body punch. But if you pull in the opponent's hand they will lose their balance and their head will be at body level so a mid level punch becomes an upper level punch. The same

is true for eye gouges ; they have not been removed from karate texts.

Part 6 Would Karate have been Able to Last Had it Not removed It's Dangerous Techniques ?

The idea that in order for karate to survive after the Meiji period, it was necessary to make it a part of the school curriculum is problematic. I do not believe that as the case. Even though karate was prohibited by governmental policies, and was forced to be taught in secret, not in public schools, it was still able to survive and be passed down generation after generation. It is a well known fact that while judo removed the dangerous techniques from randori practice, they still remain in katas. Other disciplines such as traditional jujutsu and kenjutsu have maintained their dangerous techniques, and yet managed to survive. Moreover in the age of a militaristic society, at that time, there was ample room for the existence of martial arts.

In conclusion, what was important for making karate acceptable for public school education was not to remove dangerous techniques, but to establish a methodological teaching system. The characteristics of the newly created Heian katas are that they progress in difficulty from Shodan to Godan. In addition to that, master Kentsu Yabu created the etiquette and the warm up exercises under the influence of military training.

Part 7 About the Fact that There are Various Different Versions of Heian Katas

Currently there are numerous versions depending on the style. Why do they exist, and which ones were newly created in the Meiji years? The photograph entitled "Kata practiced at an Okinawan elementary school" shows the students doing a zenkutsu dachi (front stance) and a gedan barai (down block). In Shotokan they are performing Heian Shodan. It is often said that master Funakoshi changed the kata, but photograph of master Funakoshi teaching Heian katas on the mainland is approximately the same as the photograph of the Okinawan elementary school. On the other hand, it is different from Shito Ryu's neko ashi dachi (cat stance), tettui uke (hammer fist block), and motodachi (basic stance). According to Sensei Hiroshi Kinjo the karate that Master Itosu taught could be divided into "the karate, which he taught at his home" and "that which he taught at schools." It may be that the photograph shows the "karate, which he taught at the schools." Sensei Kinjo also wrote in his book "Karatedo Taikan" that Master Itosu altered the traditional katas, so even among his own students there were differences among his students from before the katas were changed and those who studied with him after the changes.

Master Mabuni, in his book, Kobo Kempo Karate do Nyumon, wrote that the original name for the Heian katas was Channan. Thus, indicating that the katas were not named Heian when they were created. In the same work he wrote that there were differences in the katas known as Channan and Heian. It appears that there was a divide in the

transmission of the kata in Okinawa, even before it was taught on the mainland. Also, according to Karate Kenkyu (Youju Shorin), master Choki Motobu was reported to have learned Channan from master Anko Itosu. It makes reference to the fact that Heian and Channan were different. Sensei Motobu was from 17 to 25 years old during that period. So, since he was born in 1870 that would have been 1887-1895. Since the Heian katas were officially introduced in 1904, we can imagine that the Channan, which is considered the original, existed for quite some time before that. From these facts we can guess that various versions of Heian katas existed even in their creator's master Itosu's lifetime.

Section 5 Consideration of Shotokans Heian Katas.

So, it is generally believed that Shotokan katas have been altered, but in exactly where and in what manner have they been altered? Here, I would like to do a comparative examination of the katas in Karate Kempo. Karate Kempo was written by Mr. Mizuho Mutsu in 1933 who studied under Master Gichin Funakoshi. But he wasn't satisfied, so he went to Okinawa with Mr. Jisaburo Miki around 1928 to study under sensei's Kentsu Yabu, Chomo Hanashiro, Chodo Oshiro and Chotoku Kiyon, who were considered to be the leading students of Master Itosu at the time. These sensei's were co-disciples under Itosu. Mr. Mizuho Miki also co-wrote Gaisetsu of Okinawan Kempo, which contains interviews with Mr. Jisaburo Miki in 1930, and he also was an instructor at the Tokyo University karate club from 1933-1936.

In the table of contents of that book, in section 2, there is a portion of bunkai, under the heading "The Meaning of Individual Postures." Then, after that there are some illustrations of katas explaining the "Method of Katas." Also in that book, there are 20 Shuri katas; Heian, Naihanchi, Passai Dai, KushankuDai, Jitte, Seishan, Wanshu, Jion, Chinto, Passai Sho, KushankuSho, Niseshi, Chinte, and Gojushiho.

Chart 1. Heian Shodan (Heian Nidan in Karate Kempo)

Heian Shodan	Shotokan	Karate Kempo
Yoi (ready)	Heiko dachi (shoulder stance)	Heisoku dachi (closed feet stance)
#4 movement	Hankokutsu dachi (half back stance)	Zenkutsu dachi (front stance) right hand to left shoulder
#4 movement	Kentsui uchi (hammer fist strike)	Uraken (back fist) to oppo- nents face The course is to the side
#7 movement	Jodan shuto uke (upper knife hand block) w/left hand to the front	Jodan shuto uke (left upper block to the front)

In Shotokan, the 7th movement is an upper block, then the hand opens to a knife hand block, but in Karate Kempo that part is an upper block. After that, it is exactly the same. So, we see that it is basically the same kata. I do not believe the difference is big enough to say that it was altered.

Chart 2. Heian Nidan (Heian Shodan in Karate Kempo)

Heian Nidan	Shotokan	Karate Kempo
Movement #3 ; #6	Kokutsu dachi (back stance)	Zenkutsu dachi (front stance)
Movement #8	Yoko geri (side kick)	Mae geri (front kick (groin kick))
Between movement #15 and #16	n/a	Left uchi uke? (inside to outside block), left zenkutsu dachi to the rear Left zenkutsu dachi, right gyakuzuki (reverse punch) to the rear
Between movement #22 and #23	n/a	Jodan double punch to the rear (Meoto te)
Movement #25 and 28	Zenkutsu dachi, jodan shuto uke (upper knife hand block)	n/a
Between movement #24 and #25	n/a	(Upper reverse punch) jodan gyakuzuki
Between movement #26 and naore	n/a	Same as above

In Heian Nidan there is a side kick, which is a major characteristic of Shotokan. It is likely that master Gichin Funakoshi altered this part. In the case of movement #15 and #16, the number of movements when facing the rear, are abbreviated from movement #22. The double handed punch which follows the double handed block and the upper reverse punch which follows the last upper block have been abbreviated.

Chart 3. Heian Sandan

Heian Sandan	Shotokan	Karate Kempo
Connected Movement	Right nukite diagonally to the left	Right nukite fist faces upward
Movement # 9	Kiba dachi (horse stance), left Kentsui (hammer fist)	

Even though the direction of the kuzushi (push) is different, all of the stances except one case are the same, so I think we can say that they are the same katas.

Chart 4. Heian Yodan

Heian Yodan	Shotokan	Karate Kempo
Movement #6, movement #9	Yoko geri (Side Kick)	Yoko geri
Movements #23 through 25	Kokutsu dachi plus double hand block	Zenkutsu dachi plus double Hand block

A major difference is the side kick, but we see that they are practically the same kata.

Chart 5. Heian Godan

Heian Godan	Shotokan	Karate Kempo
Movement #13 Turn to the back	Kiba Dachi, down block	Zenkutsu dachi, Gedan barai
Movement #14 To the front	Kiba dachi, Haito uke (ridge hand block)	Zenkutsu dachi, Haito uke
Movement #20 To the rear	Migi zenkutsu dachi (right front stance) morote uke (double hand block)	n/a
Movement #21 to the front	Hidari kokutsu dachi, manji uke (cross block)	n/a
Movement #25 to the front	Migi kokutsu dachi (right), manji uke	n/a

Other than the absence of movement #20, double hand block, while the number of movements is different because of in between moves, the kata is basically the same.

Part 6 A Consideration of Shotokan's Side Kick

Basically, the katas, which Master Anko Itosu taught, did not contain side kicks. It is said that Master Gichin Funakoshi altered Master Itosu's katas. One of the things, which he changed, was the side kick. This side kick is Shotokan's signature technique, and it is a major characteristic of its katas. When Master Gichin Funakoshi came to the mainland, the Sidekick was already in the kata. Master Funakoshi was born in 1868, and was in his fifties when he came to the mainland. It is pretty hard to believe that he changed a leg technique from that time. It is believed that he practiced and used the side kick from when he was younger. Let's look at where the side kick came from. It is said that master Funakoshi was taught it by his first teacher, Sensei Anko Asato (1827-1903). Sensei Asato was one of Master Sokon Matsumura's early top students. If we look at traditional oral lore, Master Funakoshi is his only student ever listed. In 1902 in the Ryukyu Shimpō Newspaper there was an article dictated by Sensei Asato, and written by Master Funakoshi entitled "Okinawan Combat Techniques." In that article, there is a reference to a leg technique that attacks from "below the field of vision." "I believe that there are many who value hand techniques over secret leg techniques, but sometimes leg techniques can be more valuable. In actual fighting, one must not forget that when in hand to hand combat, there are always the legs." From this article one can surmise that Sensei Asato was very

good at leg techniques.

Section 6 The Mystery of Naihanchi (Tekki)

Part 1 Karate's Biggest Mystery

This kata was originally called Naihanchi or Naihanchi. In Shotokan master Funakoshi changed the names of katas from their Chinese pronunciation to Japanese pronunciation. At first it was changed to Kiba Dachi and then to Tekki. In Shuri Te karate, before the creation of the Heian katas, it was the first basic kata, which one learned, and it was said that students were made to practice this kata for 3 years. It is believed that it took its present form when master Itosu improved upon the kata called Channan. Itosu further broke down the one kata into its Nidan and Sandan forms. In the dialogue "Speaking About the History of Modern Karate" (Shinkin Gima, Ryozo Fujiwara), the following conversation is introduced concerning the traditions of Okinawa around the time the "Bubishi" was introduced. I would like to take an excerpt from it.

***Fujiwara** - This is a story, which I heard when I visited Okinawa about 10 years ago. Around the end of the Edo period, there were some Chinese drifters who came to Tomari who were quite skilled at martial arts. They built a log hut near the Tomari cemetery, where they lived. It is said that Masters Sokon Matsumura and Kizo Teruya paid a certain amount of money for tuition and took lessons in Chinese martial arts from them. When the Chinese were going to return home, they asked for some paper and a brush. In a few days they handed a scroll to Master Sokon Matsumura.*

***Gima** - "There is also a story that says Master Anko Itosu learned Chinese kempo from Channan, a Chinese drifter who was living near the Tomari cemetery."*

***Fujiwara** - "Yes, that is the kata Naihanchi, which Master Kenwa Mabuni learned in his youth. In other words, Master Mabuni learned the kata Naihanchi from the pupil of Sokon Matsumura, Sensei Morihiro Matakichi. Years later, when he performed that kata in front of Master Anko Itosu, he was told by Itosu that "That is the original form of the kata which he had learned from the Chinese drifters. The current kata is one, which I have altered after careful study. So stop practicing the old form, and practice the new form." There are conjectures about the identity of Channan ; that he was a Zen priest, that he was a spy, or that he was a pirate, but it is certain that he was a practitioner of martial arts. It is also true that Master Anko Itosu learned the kata Naihanchi from him."*

This kata is representative of those katas, which are difficult to explain. There are many interesting explanations for the embusen (line of performance), which is in a straight line horizontally. Some say that it is for fighting with one's back to a wall, or that it is for fighting on a bridge, or for fighting in a narrow space like a hallway. I think these explanations came about because few people actually know the actual application. It is said that Master Choki Motobu, a master of actual combat, knew only this one kata.

(This, in fact, is a misconception because it was only transmitted to a few disciples.) It is a mysterious kata, though, which is effective for fighting, but the application is practically unknown. Currently, the application of this kata is probably one of the biggest mysteries of the karate world.

Part 2 The Alteration of Naihanchi

As we have seen, a legend about Master Kenwa Mabuni was that he was told by master Itosu that “That is the form of Naihanchi before I changed it.” Because of this, it is said Master Itosu changed the kata. But to what degree did he actually change it?

Master Mabuni began studying under master Itosu in 1903 around the age of 14. Since this coincides with master Itosu’s introduction of Okinawan karate into the public schools, he may have been referring to the changes, which he made for teaching at school.

In an interview with Choki Motobu, in “Karate Kenkyu” (Genwa Nakasone) he states that Master Matsumura and Master Itosu’s Naihanchi were different. Master Matsumura performed the hook punch diagonally in the front, and Master Itosu performed the hook punch with a bent elbow. Master Matsumura performed the nami gaishi by putting his foot down quietly, while Master Itosu stomped his foot fiercely.

In Hiroshi Kinjo’s Karate Taikan, he wrote that in generations before his time (1919) the double handed hook punch was performed open handed, and the hand that supported the uraken (back fist) was a nihon nukite (two finger thrust). Currently, those are the changes that are believed to have been made. If the bunkai had been passed down with the kata these would not pose a problem. If Master Itosu did make major changes in the movements, it would be radically different from the Naihanchi of other styles, but even if we compare it to the Tomari Naihanchi, except for the direction of the moves at the beginning of the kata, there is not a recognizable difference.

Part 3 Did Master Itosu Create the 2nd and 3rd Parts to Naihanchi ?

It is reported that Master Itosu created Naihanchi 2 and 3. Since other styles also have Naihanchi 2 and 3, there are some doubts about that. I think it is natural that they existed already.

Part 4 The Characteristics of Naihanchi

1 : Learning Basic Posture

One can learn basic posture from standing in a kiba dachi (horse stance). Master Choki Motobu said that “The posture of the legs and hips in Naihanchi is the basic posture for karate.” Also, “Whichever direction one turns, to the left or to right, they will be in a correct fighting position, and all of the hidden movements (meanings) are included.” The

width of the stance is the length of the shin plus two fists. One should stand on the balls of the feet. At that width, if one turns their body diagonally to the front and places their weight to the front, it becomes a zenkutsu dachi (front stance). And if they adjust their weight to the rear, it becomes a kokutsu dachi (back stance). In this sense, it is a basic stance. Also, through the repetition of the basic movements, it effectively trains the body.

2 : Application for Close in Fighting

Contrary to the stereotypical notion that Shuri Te style karate is for fighting at a distance, the application for Naihanchi, the first kata taught, is for close in fighting. It is a good text for learning to immobilize one's opponent before striking, which is a basic principle of combat. If one were to describe this kata in one word, I believe it would be that it is surprisingly "complete."

Chapter 5

Hidden Karate

Section 1 Sensei Shozan Kubota

Sensei Kubota was purported to have been one of the last of master Gichin Funakoshi top students to whom he entrusted his final words. Articles about sensei Kubota appeared in "Karate and Martial Arts" in 1985 in the February, April, May, June, and July issues, and in "Modern Karate" in 1986 in its February issue.

April 1935	He entered Tokyo Shoka University (Currently Hitotsubashi University) and began training under master Funakoshi.
1941	He was awarded 3rd degree black belt by Master Funakoshi upon graduation. (At that time were only 5 levels of black belt.)
1944	As an infantry Second lieutenant of army he demonstrated to Master Funakoshi the results of his instruction of martial arts to his subordinates and was awarded a fourth degree black belt.
1947-1950	Taught at karate clubs at Chuo University and Senshu University. During that time, he restored the karate club to his alma mater, Hitotsubashi University to Shotokan style. For the ten years after 1947 he concentrated on "tournament training." He met Sensei Zenya Kunii of the Kashima Shin Ryu style of kendo, and was asked by him to succeed him as the Grand master of that style, but he declined.
1951	He moved to Osaka. He received a fifth degree black belt from Master Mabuni Kenwa.
1952	Taught karate to officers from the US Air Force physical education department as a representative of karate instructor's organization, of which Master Funakoshi was head. Participated in the foundation of the Japan Karate Association.
1954	He held the first red/white match at the Tokyo Gymnasium.
1957	He moved to Nagoya. He instructed at Nagoya Kogyo University and Aichi Gakuin University.
1961	He was invited to take the post of technical advisor to the Japan Karate Federation. He declined, however, due to a conflict with his own karate values
1962	He was tournament advisor for the World Karate Tournament held at the Nippon Budokan.
1985	He became the instructor for the Hitotsubashi University karate club, and taught martial arts karate to alumni of the same club, "Ikukai." President of same club.
1972	Resigned as president of "Ikukai." Supreme instructor for junior students.
1976	Passed away

Section 2 Katas can be Used !

When I first met Sensei Kubota, he showed me Heian Shodan. I knew that he was a karate instructor, but I could not recognize the kata that he performed as Heian Shodan. It looked liked some kind of Tai Chi kata.

Myself : "Is that Tai Chi or something?"
Sensei : "It's karate."
Myself : "What is the name of that kata?"
Sensei : "It's Heian Shodan."
Myself : "???? What is your style?"
Sensei : "Shotokan. Direct from Gichin Funakoshi."
Myself : "Huhh!? I also practice Shotokan, why is it so different?"
Sensei : "You are just doing gymnastics."
Myself : "Why?"
Sensei : "Can you use your kata with kumite?"
Myself : "No. I can not."
Sensei : "So, you are just doing gymnastics."
Myself : "Sensei can you use your kata for kumite?"
Sensei : "Let's see. Come at me."
Myself : *"Are you sure? You're pretty old," I thought to myself.*
 "Pow, ouch!"
Myself : "I give up!" *"Ouch, what's up with this old man?"*

Thus was my first encounter with him.

Sensei Kubota believed that the Heian katas contained the essence of karate in a very concise form. In particular, he believed that Heian Shodan was central among them.

In fact, the first move (gedan barai), and second move (chudan oizuki) contain important hints to explain katas, but in reality it is often looked upon lightly as a kata for beginners.

Section 3 The Secret Pact

Before meeting Sensei Kubota, I myself, believed that one could not use kata for kumite. According to Sensei Kubota, katas were altered on purpose when they were exported to the mainland.

The following is what I was told by Sensei Kubota. When Master Gichin Funakoshi introduced Okinawan karate to the mainland, there was a "secret pact" made among the practitioners of Okinawan karate. Karate was primarily spread at universities, and the explanation, which Sensei Kubota learned, was about the same as today.

It was, however, completely different than what he was taught at night by Master Funakoshi at his house. When asked, "Why did he teach something different than in the

day time?"

His answer was that "Master Funakoshi was actually not supposed to teach it."

In other words, because of a "secret pact," he was not to teach the "yamatonchu" (the slang for Japanese mainlanders) or teach them katas, which they cannot use. When he taught his ordinary students he taught them katas, which they would not be able to use.

Sensei Kubota also learned from Master Kenwa Mabuni. Master Mabuni also divided his teaching into "the original form" and "the other form." Sensei Kubota learned Naihanchi when Master Mabuni offered to teach him the original form of Naihanchi. In return, he said that he taught Master Mabuni the Shotokan side kick and its defense.

There is a well known saying in karate that goes ; "Even if you teach the kata, don't teach the actual techniques." I believe this phrase expresses well the contents of the "secret pact."

According to Sensei Kubota, in order to unravel the kata, it is necessary to know the oral instruction, which will restore the bunkai to its original form. When I myself learned the bunkai for the first movement of Heian Nidan, I felt that it was not handed down incorrectly, but rather it was clear that it had been changed deliberately. This is true also of the Shuri style katas, which seemed to have been changed to make the movements of the katas as far from the original bunkai as possible.

Section 4 Consideration of the Secret Pact

Was there an organized movement in the karate world at that time ?

The "Okinawan Karate Kenkyu Kai" was established in 1918 with Master Kenwa Mabuni in charge. The members included Masters Kentsu Yabu, Chomo Hanashiro, Gichin Funakoshi, Choshin Chibana, Anbun Tokuda, Shinpan Shiroma, Chozo Oshiro, Masasumi Tokumura, Takayuki Ishikawa, and Chojun Miyagi.

Is there any evidence that Master Funakoshi was in contact with Okinawa with regard to teaching Okinawan karate on the mainland ?

In the book *Karate, My Way of Life* by Funakoshi, he states that in 1922 he sent letters to both sensei's, consulting with them about teaching Okinawan karate on the mainland. It is believed that the content of those letters was deliberated upon by the "Okinawan Karate Kenkyu Kai."

Was there a necessity for Master Funakoshi to consult with Okinawa ?

Master Funakoshi did not originally go the mainland to teach, rather, he went to demonstrate Okinawan karate. Therefore, I believe it was only natural for him to consult with his fellow colleagues, as well as the "Okinawan Karate Kenkyu Kai," about teaching on the mainland. This is because he had planned to eventually return to Okinawa. Life in the countryside is the same everywhere. The consensus of the community is very impor-

tant. There was the possibility, that not only he himself, but also his family as well, could not ignore it for fear of losing their support. Moreover, with his family still in Okinawa, and he planning to return to Okinawa, one can surmise that he was not in a position to ignore the opinions of his colleagues and the "Okinawan Karate Kai."

What actions did the central figures of Okinawan Karate take after that ?

If we look at the fact that the 12 katas which were established by the Okinawan Karate Shinko Kyokai (consisting basically of the same members as the Okinawan Karate Kenkyu Kai) were similar to the Taikyoku katas, which were organized for beginners, we can see that the leading figures in Okinawan karate at that time were considering how to disseminate Okinawan Karate. In other words they had already begun to differentiate katas between those for the general spread of karate, and those for their own style.

Were the proper body mechanics and kata bunkai passed on ?

Unfortunately, even for such basics katas as the Heian katas, there is no acceptable bunkai today for these katas.

Section 5 Discrimination Against Okinawa at the Time

One can find assertions by both Masters Gichin Funakoshi and Kenwa Mabuni in their writings that "Okinawans are Japanese" and that "Okinawan karate is a martial art." It may seem strange to us in this day and age, but I believe those claims were necessary amid the social backdrop of discrimination that existed against Okinawa. The following historical event sheds light on the social mood of the day.

The Human Museum Incident

In 1903, from March to July, the government held its 5th Industrial Exhibition at the Osaka's Tennoji. At the same time, unrelated to the exhibition, various for-profit side show booths sprang up around there. One of those was a thatched hut called "Academic Human Museum." Listed as its academic research credentials, it had North Koreans, Hokkaido Ainu, Taiwanese Mountain Villagers, Indians, Javanese, Turks, Africans, and Okinawans on display. Needless to say, the "Academic Human Museum" became embroiled in sharp criticism and protests from Okinawa. In addition to that, in a journal kept by Master Chojun Miyagi, the founder of Goju Ryu, referred to discrimination, which he encountered.

It is easy to imagine the ideological background in which, with respect to the exportation of Okinawan karate to the mainland, the Okinawans were anxious to actively progress toward assimilation into Japan in order to improve their social standing. At the same time one can imagine that they felt some antipathy toward the Japanese who had dominated them.

It is not curious in the least that there would have been a conscious effort toward "not teaching the essence of Okinawan karate to the mainland Japanese."

Section 6 The Mystery of Karate as My Way of Life

It is written in *Butoden* (Kozo Kaku) that Master Gichin Funakoshi, when asked about the bunkai of kata, was “unable to answer.” If we realize that it was not that he did not know about it, but rather could not teach it indiscriminately, then it makes sense. Master Funakoshi was born in 1868. So, when he came to the mainland in 1922 he was in his mid-fifties. Since he began studying Okinawan Karate from his early teens, he had already been training for over 40 years when he came to the mainland. Would it truly be possible for Funakoshi, who was master Sokon Matsumura’s top student, and trained under the top sensei’s of the time, Anko Asato, and Anko Itosu, to have absolutely no knowledge of kata bunkai?

In a “*Karate Jukun*” (Ten Principles) which was submitted to the prefectural government in 1908, Master Funakoshi’s sensei Master Anko Itosu wrote “One should learn the meaning of a kata before practicing it” and “the oral tradition explanations for kata.”

Before coming to the mainland, Master Funakoshi had been performing public demonstrating of Okinawa Karate in order to introduce it openly. He demonstrated Okinawa Karate to the Crown Prince (later Showa Emperor Hirohito) when he visited Okinawa on his return from Europe.

It is doubtful that, at a time when there were many other practitioners, one that was of such a low level that he didn’t even know the bunkai for kata would be chosen for such important demonstrations. Moreover, would he have been chosen to represent Okinawan Karate to the mainland?

After the first introductory demonstration in 1922, Master Funakoshi did a demonstration at Dr. Kano’s Kodokan. He performed *Kushanku*, and Master Gima performed *Naihanchi*, and demonstrated 10 or so *Yakusoku Bunkai* patterns. After that he stayed on and instructed the high level students for several months. Master Funakoshi got the idea to teach Okinawan karate on the mainland from these experiences. He most probably intended to teach in the same manner that he already had been in elementary schools and at his home. He wrote a letter to his hometown to ask their opinion about that at that time.

Here lies a great mystery. In his book *Karate as My Life*, Master Funakoshi wrote that he sent a letter asking for the opinion of his sensei Master Itosu, and Master Asato in 1922. This is strange though, because both men had already passed away by that time. Whether or not he made a mistake, it is clear that he did consult with someone concerning teaching Okinawan karate on the mainland. Since his senseis had already passed away, it makes sense that he consulted his colleagues. That would mean that he probably consulted Masters *Kentsu Yabu*, and *Chomo Hanashiro*. I personally believe that he wrote it in a way to be confusing on purpose. It seems extremely odd in that context.

Since Master Funakoshi's decision to disseminate Okinawan karate on the mainland was rather sudden, I do not believe that a decision had been made as to how much he should teach. This was at a time when, even in Okinawa, karate had been practiced under the veil of secrecy, and it had only been 20 years since the Heian katas had been introduced into the public schools. That is probably when they decided that, even if they taught the katas, they would not teach the real techniques.

Section 7 Comparison of Traditional Karate and Modern Karate

Part 1 Comparison Table

(This is only a rough comparison, and does not cover all techniques.)

Technique to Compare	Traditional Karate	Modern Karate
Names of movements	No names	There are names
Hikite (pulling hand)	To pull the opponent to toward you	To punch from the hip
Front hand	Front hand is for offense	Front hand is a block
Blocks	Block with both hands	Block with one hand
Imaginary opponent	There is usually one opponent	There are several meanings of movements Several movements are one technique String of basic techniques
Body shift	Walk	Slide step
Throws	There are throws	Throws are allowed in kumite
Reverse techniques	There are reverse techniques	There are some
Method of combat	Immobilize opponent before striking	Hit a moving opponent
Use of body	Do not use power	Use power
Kata	Katas are useable	Katas are for demonstration
Kumite	Bunkai kumite	Free sparring
Tournaments	Challenge match	Use rules
Oral instruction	Uses oral instruction	Don't use
Use of weapons	Uses together	Separate

(This comparison is based on the modern karate, which I had learned, and the karate I learned from Sensei Kubota.)

Part 2 A Proposal Based on this Comparison

I have attempted to make some comparisons between modern karate, which I had learned first, and traditional karate, which I learned from Sensei Kubota. How could karate have changed so much in only 80 years?

If one looks carefully at this comparison, it is obvious that some techniques are the exact opposite, indicating that they have not been handed down correctly. Modern karate's katas lack the real essence, and do not contain such things as proper use of body and such.

Not only has the bunkai not been handed down, modern karate itself has moved in a different direction altogether. Because karate on the mainland lacked bunkai, people added their own out of necessity, thus developing in an altogether different direction on its own. Just as judo developed foot techniques from randori, new foot work, foot sweeps, mawashi and other kicks, and other colorful techniques used in tournaments were formulated from free sparring. These techniques did not exist in Okinawan karate. No matter how much karate progresses in these areas, there still remains the dilemma of katas, which cannot be used.

Section 8 If You Teach Katas, Do Not Teach the Real Techniques

Part 1 Katas Really can be Taught

There is a saying in karate that "Even if you teach the kata, do not teach the hidden techniques." I believe that the techniques they are referring to are bunkai and proper body mechanics.

Also, another way of saying "Do not teach the hidden techniques" is "hidden techniques can be taught." In other words they can be taught, but they should not be taught. In traditional martial arts on the mainland, one cannot learn the intermediate techniques while they are beginners. In the case of karate, though, there is no clear delineation of technical levels, so what has happened is that the movements of the katas have been taught, but the bunkai hasn't. The result is that only the superficial techniques like kicks and punches are taught, while the other techniques are kept under cover.

Part 2 Choose Who You Teach to

Because karate is a martial art containing potentially deadly techniques, the masters of old could not teach it to just anyone. That is also part of the idea that they should not teach the hidden techniques when they taught katas. Consequently it was necessary to judge one's character before teaching them. Thus the saying "karate is a virtuous man's martial art." This does not mean that one will become virtuous through the practice, rather that unless one were virtuous, they would not be taught. Accordingly, it was common to only teach the basics until the teacher would ascertain whether or not the

student was of sufficient character to be taught the hidden techniques.

Part 3 To Whom could They Teach ?

In the case of martial arts on the mainland, the rank of menkyokaiden (master rank) meant that they were allowed to be taught the secret techniques.

In the case of karate, though, because it was practiced in secret, there was no system of certification. Until one was told that they were ready to be taught, they could not be sure of their own level.

Also, there was some confusion due the fact that it was the practice to learn different katas from different instructors.

Accordingly it was difficult for the karate teachers to objectively judge the students' level.

Section 9 Oral Instruction is the Key to Unlock Katas

Originally oral instruction explaining the meaning and application of katas existed. Sensei Kubota, (Photograph 22), passed down this oral instruction for the bunkai of katas. It is similar to the "Principles of Kaisai" in Goju Ryu. Once one learns the oral instruction, katas become full of a sense of reality. For example it is said that the front hand is for offense and the back hand is for defense. If this oral instruction is applied to the first move of Heian Nidan, it will look like photograph 23.

This photograph is from the book Karate do Kyohan written by Master Funakoshi. His opponent is Master Otsuka, the founder of Wado Ryu.



学生を指導する久保田先生

Photograph 22



Photograph 23

Heian Nidan was the first kata that I learned, and I was fond of it, but I had some questions about the normal bunkai. The bunkai shown in picture 23 is the first bunkai that I learned from Sensei Kubota. It most certainly characterizes the phrase "to strike straight from one's eyesight."

The normal bunkai for this is a left inside block of the opponent's right upper punch. (Photograph 24)

With this method, the following attack would be a second count.



Photograph 24

conscious effort was made to make it the exact opposite.

On the other hand, Master Funakoshi's bunkai indicates a left upper block and a right upper cut. In this case the block and the attack are executed in a single count. In other words, the method of countering an attack according to the common explanation is the opposite of the true bunkai. Since this is true for other styles, as well, it cannot be attributed to mistakes or changes. Rather, it is clear that a conscious effort was made to make it the exact opposite.

Section 10 Demonstration Katas Versus Actual Combat Katas

Sensei Kubota divided katas into "katas for demonstration" and "katas for combat." Katas for demonstration are for show, so the movements have been stylized and in order not to be revealed, the techniques that are executed in one count are broken down into two counts. It is safe to say that most katas which one sees are this type. Just performing these kinds of katas, which are used in tournaments and demonstrations, they will not be able to actually use them. Katas for combat are those, which show the bunkai, and can actually be used. Generally speaking, they are almost unknown. They are devised so that they can be used directly for bunkai kumite.

Katas should be practiced together with oral instruction in order to be able to use them. There are various ways to practice these katas; breaking them up into blocks, performing them quickly, or slowly. One should not however practice them in the same manner as those for demonstration.

There is a similar method of practice in Shinkage Ryu Heiho (kenjutsu), which I studied. In Shinkage Ryu, one technique is broken down into two steps for the purpose of teaching. For beginners a technique is practiced in two counts or movements. The same technique is practiced in one count or movement by advanced students. Therefore if someone only practices a technique as a beginner using two counts for many years, they will not be able to use it effectively. It is necessary to graduate and practice it at the next level.

Section 11 Sensei Kubota's Teaching Method

Sensei Kubota, as with most old fashioned martial artists, would not easily teach the bunkai of katas. Instead of teaching me, he would constantly ask me, "What is the meaning of that move?" When I couldn't answer, he would just laugh and say "it's your homework" and leave.

The next time I saw him, I would show him the results of my research and have him critique it. He would continue to give me the same problem until I was able to solve it. If I was having a hard time figuring out a move, he would say to me "Come at me." Then we would begin kumite. Sensei Kubota, however, would ask "how would you attack from here?" But it would be twice my normal distance, and I did not know what techniques he would use, so I was so fearful that I could not get close to him.

Conversations with Sensei generally went as follows :

Myself : "Sensei, what is that?"

Sensei : "Such and such a kata."

Myself : "Huh? Really?"

"How do you use it?"

"Can you really use that?"

Sensei : "*Arrg!* Okay then come at me!"

Myself : "Ohh!" "Yikes!!!"

And so on . . .

Sensei : "Higaki, you're kicking to the rear, but there is no opponent."

Myself : "But sensei, you say that, but your kata has a kick to the rear."

Sensei : "*Arrg!* The opponent is to the front!" (*That's all*)

Sensei : "Higaki, do you think a knife hand block is finished with just the block?"

Myself : "... No."

Sensei : "Then what do you think follows it?"

Myself : "I don't know."

Sensei : "Think about it!"

Myself : "*You're not going to teach me?*"

So then I would try and try to figure it out while Sensei watches and laughs.

"Sensei, is this it?"

Sensei : "Yes, that's it." (*The lesson is finished.*)

That was his style of teaching. Every once in a while he would give me a hint.

As far as techniques go, I was usually the one being attacked, so it was difficult for me to objectively know how to execute the technique. Rather than having been taught, it is better to say that pain was inflicted on me.

It sounds like he was just a mean old man. After a hellishly hard practice session, though, we would go to a local yakitori restaurant and talk about many things over beers. I wish now that I had written more things down.

He would say things like "One's antenna must be sensitive." Or "I can't teach guys who just don't get it.", and "You can't improve if you don't use your head."

Recently, I have come to realize that I wasn't just taught, but I was able to learn how to figure things out. This method is good because when one figures something out on their own, they will not forget it.

In this day and age, I wonder just exactly how many people would go along with that kind of teaching.

Chapter 6

Combat Techniques of Karate

In order to understand bunkai, it is necessary to understand certain combat principles of karate. These can be broken down into countering the first contact and measures taken after that. Some of these techniques will overlap with those presented in the next section, so I will cover only a few of these here.

Section 1 There is no First Strike in Karate

This is the second of “Master Funakoshi’s 20 Principles of Karate.” This is commonly taken as a moralistic statement meaning that “Those who practice karate should not act in a violent way.” From a technical point of view, however, I believe this aptly characterizes an important combative principle of karate. One is able to maintain a safe position when countering an opponent’s attack. Using that countering method, one is able to deliver an effective attack.

Section 2 Think of Your Hands and Feet as Swords

The 15th of the “20 Principles of Karate-do”, “think of your hands and feet as swords” was a continuation of Master Anko Asato’s philosophy. It is said by some that the model for karate is Jigen Ryu Kenjutsu. Whether this is true or not aside, it was certainly thought of as a means of self-defense. Weapons existed throughout the history of combat. Empty handed fighting is actually the exception. It was not possible to block an armed attack with one’s body alone. In such an attack, it was likely that one would have carried a weapon, so Master Asato felt that it was important to practice as if one were carrying one. In other words, in order to truly protect oneself; one should practice as though “One’s hands and feet are swords.”

Section 3 Counter Methods

The most common combative technique in karate is a counter. A counter is where an attack is blocked and an attack is executed. In Master Choki Motobu’s teachings there is an interesting concept. He said that “the blocking hand” must immediately become the attacking hand. It is not a true martial technique to block with one hand and counter with another. As one progresses, the block and counter attack will be simultaneous, and that is the true martial technique.

This is why “there cannot be multiple attacks against true Okinawan karate, because if an attack is countered properly, there can be no further attack.”

Section 4 Immobilize the Opponent before Striking

According to Sensei Kubota, Master Funakoshi often said “Immobilize your opponent before striking.” What this means is to render your opponent into such a state that he cannot attack again, or even move, before executing a strike or a kick. As one progresses in their understanding of bunkai, this concept becomes clearer. Just about whenever I practiced bunkai with Sensei Kubota, I was rendered into an immobilized state.

Section 5 Kick Low while Grabbing the Opponent

There is a saying that goes “Kicks are meant to be delivered below the belt.” Also, if we take a look at most of the bunkai for katas, they are executed while grabbing the opponent. In that manner, one can avoid the unstable situation of “standing on one leg.” Moreover, by grabbing one’s opponent and knocking them off balance, the opponent will not be able to execute a counter attack. In close fighting where one can grab an opponent, the field of vision is limited, so it is difficult to defend against a low kick. In the Book Kempo Karate, written in the late 1920’s, most of the kicks it showed were described as groin kicks. Also in the kumite matches that used protective gear at the University of Tokyo’s karate club, points were awarded for front kicks, which hit the groin cover.

Section 6 The Development of Power

Techniques essential to the development of power are also hidden in katas. For beginners it is sufficient to grab an opponent and punch while pulling them in to you. But how is one to develop the power required to execute a “killing blow”, which is the catch phrase of karate? The answer is in proper posture and movement. A hint is hidden in Heian Shodan’s first movement, down block, straight punch. The method of moving in karate is walking, not a connected gait. For purposes of practice, the simpler the better, so the Heian katas and Taikyoku katas were designed for that purpose.

Section 7 Throws and Reverse Techniques

The common perception is that karate consists of kicks and punches, and Mr. Jisaburo Miki, in his book Karate Kempo Gaisetsu, defined karate as having no throws or reverse techniques. If one carefully examines kata bunkai, though, they will find that there are many throws, reverse techniques, and countermeasures against weapons.

Master Funakoshi, in his early writings introduced many of these techniques along with photographs. Also in 1956, in a 35mm film produced by the Nihon Karate Kyokai many throwing techniques were recorded. In Karate Kempo and Karate Kyohan published in the late 1920’s, “disarming a short sword” and “disarming a wide sword” were introduced. Also in his book Master Kenwa Mabuni wrote, karate is not only kicks and punches. Even though the masters who introduced karate to the mainland clearly stated that Okinawan karate contained throws and reverse techniques, there was a discrepancy in the understanding of the students who learned from them.

Section 8 Parts of the Body that are Used

In karate, many various parts of the body are used for attacks. Techniques such as nakadaka ippon ken, nukite, shuto, kentsui, and hiraken can be used effectively. There is a possibility, though, that they will be forgotten along with the bunkai for katas. Also grabs will be forgotten unless they are practiced.

Section 9 Weapons

Karate is basically an empty handed martial art, but if an opponent attacks with a weapon, it is not necessary to defend oneself empty handed. In karate there is a saying that goes, "weapon for a weapon." It sounds like "an eye for an eye."

No one goes into war without their weapons. Taking weapons into war is a fundamental principle of combat. In times of peace though, we can't carry weapons.

In Okinawa, the governmental ban on weapons, created the environment where the practice of weapons developed secretly. An added value of practicing weapons is the weight of the weapons themselves, which aides in the training of the body.

When karate was introduced to the mainland, the use of hands was emphasized, so the practice of weapons was not common, but it is a good idea to practice Okinawan weapons and karate together.

Chapter 7

Oral Instruction of Bunkai for Kata

Karate's katas cannot be used just as they are. The reason for this is two-fold, one is to insure secrecy to outsiders, and the other is to maintain a progression of advancement from beginner to advanced level. Katas have also become stylized for the purpose of presentation in competition, further confusing the line between usable and unusable katas. In order to unlock the information encoded in katas, oral instruction in bunkai is necessary. It may be possible to recreate the original meanings of katas through repeated practice of the movements, but it will involve much time. Books on bunkai published in foreign countries have taken that approach, and while they are still lacking, they should be valued for their efforts in that direction. Just as Master Anko Itosu wrote in his "10 Principles of Okinawan Karate", in 1908, "There are many oral instructions", the accompanying oral instruction is necessary to understand the bunkai for katas.

The following key phrases were taught to me directly by Sensei Kubota.

Section 1 Countering

Please refer to the previous chapter, Combative Methods in Karate.

Section 2 Immobilize the Opponent before Striking

Please refer to the previous chapter, Combative Methods of Karate.

Section 3 The Names of Movements have been Disguised

Originally there were no names for movements. Names were given when karate was introduced to the mainland. Since Okinawan karate was taught on an individual basis, an instructor could show a movement directly to his student. There was no need to give them names. On the mainland, though, karate was taught primarily at universities and it was necessary to establish set terminology and create textbooks. It wasn't until about 1935 that Shotokan established its terminology and method of instruction (warming up, basics, moving basics, kata, and kumite).

There is a problem with this terminology, though, and the real meaning of the techniques was hidden. In the bunkai, which Sensei taught me, many techniques that were called blocks were really attacks. It is not possible to understand the bunkai for katas if one is fooled by the terminology.

Section 4 There are no Techniques that End with a Block

This is an extension of the previous section. In appearances certain movements in katas seem to end with a block, but there is no combative movement, which ends in a block, therefore there is always a counteroffensive movement.

Generally it is understood that there is an abbreviated hidden move (kakushi te), which acts as an attack, adding a punch or kick. Is this really correct, though? If this is really

Section 7 The Front Hand is the Attacking Hand

It is commonly believed that the front hand is the blocking hand and the back hand is the attacking hand. This is often written in basic karate texts. But in bunkai the general rule is to attack with the front hand. By using the front hand to attack, one is able to attack from the closest possible distance. The first movement in Heian Nidan is a good example of this principle, but there are many other examples of this.

Section 8 Perform a Movement that Consists of Two Counts in One Count

Because many movements that are actually performed as one count are shown as two counts in katas, they are ineffective. It is necessary to observe the movements prior to and following the movements carefully. Many of these techniques can be explained by the addition of a switch step. An example of this is the first movement of Heian Shodan. It is broken down into two counts, a left down block, and right straight punch for beginners.

Section 9 Switch Step

Most of the movements in katas use a walking gait. In order to use these movements effectively, it is necessary to change to a switch step. When one understands this principle their understanding of katas will become deeper. For example in Heian Shodan, the upper block and straight punch should be performed in one count, while the power body moves in a switch step. More power can be applied to the punch as the feet slide, and the distance between oneself and the opponent can be adjusted as well.

When I first learned this movement from Sensei Kubota 20 years ago I didn't learn a name with it. I said to Sensei, "Sensei, is this the move that you gave me as homework?"

To which he answered "Yes, that's it."

Thus I decided to name it switch step on my own. Only after he passed on did I read in the literature that he left me that it was called "Fumi Kae" in Japanese.

Section 10 Kicks are Performed Low while Grabbing the Opponent

Please refer to the previous chapter.

Section 11 There is One Opponent to the Front

A common mistake in bunkai is that one is confused by the line of performance and led to believe that they are defending against the wrong opponent. One is not actually fighting against different opponents right to left and front to back. As a rule, there is only one

opponent to the front. The opponent is actually being dragged to the front and rear and to the left and right in a Copernican change.

In the book by Kenwa Mabuni and Genwa Nakasone, published in 1948, Kobo Kempo Karate do Nyumon, it is written that "it is mistakenly believed that the eight directions of katas signify eight opponents coming from different directions."

It is also interesting that in Naha style it is similarly stated by Toshio Tamano, in his book Okinawa Karate Goju Ryu, as well as in the "Kaisai no Genri", "There is one imaginary opponent."

Section 12 Hang the Opponent to Sky

This is the same technique as a forearm twist in Aikido. This technique is represented in between techniques in katas and it is difficult to discover without being taught. It is very effective for self-defense.

Section 13 Reblock and Regrip

This refers to not just blocking, but controlling, by shutting down the opponent's attack using both hands. For example the first three blocks of Heian Sandan cross the opponent's hands over, not allowing him to attack again. This is called "fushu" in Chinese Kempo.

Section 14 Take the Opponent's Back

The reason for this is because this is the most difficult position for the opponent to launch an attack from.

Section 15 Crossed Leg Stance Signifies Body Rotation or a Joint Kick

In some cases a crossed leg stance represents a body shift or a joint kick.

Section 16 Jumps and Body Shifts Represent Throws

In some instances jumps and body shifts represent throws.

Section 17 Break the Balance in a Triangle Whose Base is the Base of the Opponent's Feet

When throwing your opponent off balance, do it by bringing their head down toward the point of a triangle drawn between their two feet and a point in the middle to the front.

Section 18 Meoto Te

This refers to the use of both hands together. The supporting hand is the grabbing and pulling hand.

Section 19 Cut the Forearm

Sensei Kubota often said "Don't just kick and punch the opponent, try to use a technique similar to kendo whereby the forearm is chopped." An example is striking down on the opponents forearm with your knife hand, causing a painful blow, which knocks the opponent off balance.

Section 20 The Kamae is an Invitation

A down block is often said to be block against a front kick. It can also be used to bait the opponent. When one knows when the attack will occur, it is easier to defend against.

Chapter 8

Bunkai for Kata

Heian Shodan

The Explanation for Bunkai Kumite

At the time they were created, the Heian katas were called Channan. Heian Nidan (known as Shodan in styles other than Shotokan) was created first, but since it was difficult for beginners, another Shodan (known as Nidan outside of Shotokan) was created.

For most Shuri styles of karate Heian Shodan is the first kata learned. Since it has no kicks, the movements are fairly easy. Despite the seemingly easy outward appearance, at its core it contains the essential elements of karate, proper body movement, and the basic concepts of combat. Without understanding this kata's bunkai, it is difficult to understand the bunkai of other katas.

Although there are many katas, sensei Kubota viewed all other katas based on Heian Shodan.

The Main Points of Heian Shodan

1. Down Block. Straight Punch Switch Step

2. Straight Punch Grab then Punch

3. Hammer Fist Outside Hand

4. Upper Block Cross Counter

5. Knife Hand Block Eye Gouge

Heian Shodan



Ready (Yoi)



Movement 1



Movement 2



Movement 3



Movement 4



Movement 5



Movement 6



Connected Movement



Movement 7



Connected Movement



Movement 8



Connected Movement



Movement 9



Movement 10



Movement 11



Movement 12



Movement 13



Movement 14



Movement 15



Movement 16



Movement 17



Movement 18



Movement 19



Movement 20



Movement 21



Finish (Naore)

Explanation for Movements 1- 2 (Down block, straight punch)



Photograph 1 Movement 1



Photograph 2 Movement 2

Question

I believe these movements, down block and straight punch, are taught in almost every dojo as a moving basic. But in fact it cannot be used for kumite. This is because if you block an opponent's punch or kick with a down block and then execute a right straight punch, you will be too close to the opponent to actually perform the punch. (Photographs 3 - 5)



Photograph 3



Photograph 4

Photograph 5
The distance is too close.

Moreover it takes too much time to execute a down block then a straight punch, thus the opponent will be able to deliver a second punch.

(Photographs 6 - 8 Counterpunch is delivered)



Photograph 6

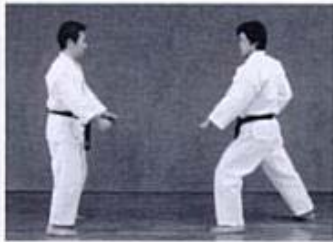


Photograph 7



Photograph 8

It is also unnatural to believe that the straight punch is delivered as the opponent is retreating. Even if this were the case, it is difficult to deliver damage to a retreating opponent. (Photographs 9 - 11)



Photograph 9



Photograph 10

Photograph 11
The opponent is retreating.

Accordingly, the natural use for this technique is a down block and right reverse punch. In fact, that is how it is often used in kumite. (Photographs 12 - 14)



Photograph 12



Photograph 13



Photograph 14 Reverse punch

What is the meaning of movements that are not useable ?

Why are we taught useless movements at the very beginning of the first kata? The answer given is that the kata is for training or that it is a beginner kata. But that explanation still leaves doubts. If we consider that it is for training, then it would be a burden since one would learn useless movements, which is quite ineffective. Furthermore, if it is for the purpose of training the lower body we might as well incorporate squats into the kata.

If, on the other hand, it is for beginners, then by teaching useless techniques to beginners, the more they practice them, the more useless they would become. Thus it would create the opposite result.

Either case seems to be illogical.

In this manner, by teaching techniques that are useless from the very beginning of the first kata that is taught, the sense that there is a gap between katas and kumite arises. I know of no written accounts of how to solve this problem. It can be solved, however, through the oral instruction associated with this kata.

Walking Step and a Continuous Step

The step, which is used in katas, is a walking step. (Photographs 15, 16, and 17)



Photograph 15 Down Block



Photograph 16 Walking Step



Photograph 17 Straight Punch

The step, which is used in kumite, is a connected step, the same used in boxing and modern kendo. (Photographs 18, 19 and 20)



Photograph 18



Photograph 19
Connected Step



Photograph 20

Oral Instruction : Switch Step

The technique that will solve this perception gap is the switch step.

Oral Instruction : Perform a Technique that is Performed in Two Counts in One

There are many instances in katas where a technique is represented as two counts, but it is actually performed in one count. In those instances, no matter how quickly the technique is performed, it will not be applicable. It is important to observe the movements that come before and after carefully in order to understand them. In the kata the left down block and right straight punch have been broken down into two movements to make it easier for beginners. It is necessary to use the switch step in order to use it.

Straight Punch with a Switch Step

In order to make the down block and straight punch movements applicable, it is necessary to perform them in one count. This is not possible, however, because the stance for the down block is a left front stance and the stance for the straight punch is a right front stance. This can be solved by using a switch step. The actual movement is as follows.

As you move the right foot forward from a left front stance slide the left foot backwards at the same time, and execute a right straight punch just before getting into a right front stance. (Photographs 21 - 27)



Photograph 21



Photograph 22
Relax the Left Knee



Photograph 23
Move the Right Foot Forward.



Photograph 24
Change the Body Weight



Photograph 25
Move the Left Foot Backward



Photograph 26
Execute a Right Straight Punch



Photograph 27

The Merits of the Switch Step

1 : Since the left down block is performed with the right foot forward, it is possible to get more distance from the opponent's front kick (Photograph 29), thus they cannot push in on you. (Photograph 28)



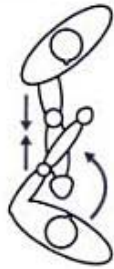
Photograph 28 Being pushed in on



Photograph 29 Not being pushed in on

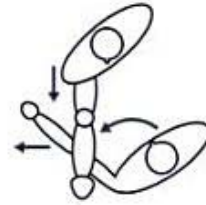
2 : The angle of the down block is to the side of the attack from the front, so it is not a direct clash of strength.

Figure 1. Clash of Strength



Left Front Stance Left Down Block

Figure 2. No clash of Strength



Right Front Stance Left Down Block

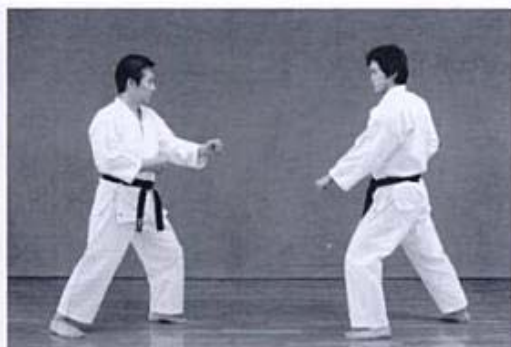
3 : The straight punch gains power from the energy that is placed on it the moment of the change of body weight.

4 : In addition to the increase in power, it is also possible to adjust the distance to the opponent by sliding both feet.

5 : Since it is necessary to use dissipated power, there is no muscle break in play, allowing for an increase in speed.

By adding this special technique, it is possible to create a complete technique.

Bunkai 1 : Against a Right Straight Punch



Photograph 30



Photograph 31



Photograph 32



Photograph 33

Movement 1

Left Front Stance Left Down Block

Using a switch step, execute a left down block while moving the right foot forward.

(Photographs 30, 31 and 32)

Movement 2

Right Front Stance Right Straight Punch

Execute a straight punch to the opponent's midsection at the same time feet change positions.

(Photograph 33)

Bunkai 2 : Against a Left Straight Punch



Photograph 34



Photograph 35



Photograph 36



Photograph 37

Movement 1

Left Front Stance Left Down Block

Using a switch step, execute a left down block while moving the right foot forward.

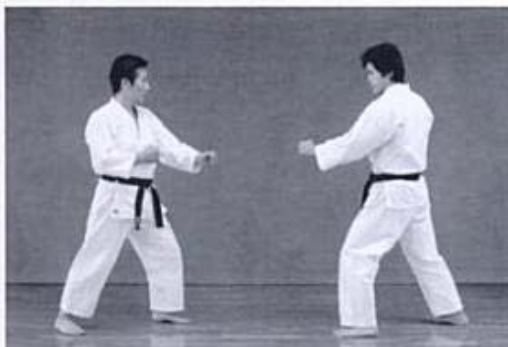
(Photographs 34, 35 and 36)

Movement 2

Right Front Stance Left Straight Punch

Execute a right straight punch at the same time you switch the right left feet. (Photograph 37)

Bunkai 3 : Against a Right Front Kick



Photograph 38



Photograph 39



Photograph 40



Photograph 41

Movement 1

Left Front Stance Left Down Block

Using a switch step, execute a left down block while moving the right foot forward.

(Photographs 38, 39 and 40)

Movement 2

Right Front Stance Right Straight Punch

Execute a right straight punch to the opponent's mid section at the same time you switch both feet.

(Photograph 41)

Bunkai Number 4 : Against a Left Front Kick



Photograph 42



Photograph 43



Photograph 44



Photograph 45

Movement 1

Left Front Stance Left Down Block

Perform a left down block while moving right leg forward. (Photographs 42, 43, and 44)

Movement 2

Right Front Stance Right Straight Punch

Execute a straight punch to the opponent's midsection at the same time feet change positions. (Photographs 45)

Application 1 : Against a Right Lower Roundhouse Kick



Photograph 46



Photograph 47



Photograph 48



Photograph 49

Using this application against a technique, I will introduce a method defending oneself not by using a down block, but by using the switch step to avoid it.

Movement 1

Left Front Stance Left Down Block

Move right leg forward while pulling the left leg back, avoiding the opponent's lower roundhouse kick. (Photographs 46, 47, and 48)

Movement 2

Right Front Stance Right Straight Punch

Execute a straight punch to the opponent's midsection at the same time the feet switch. (Photograph 49)

Application 2 : Against a Left Lower Roundhouse Kick



Photograph 50



Photograph 51



Photograph 52



Photograph 53

Movement 1

Left Front Stance Left Down Block

Move the right leg forward while pulling the left leg back, avoiding the opponent's lower roundhouse kick. (Photographs 50, 51, and 52)

Movement 2

Right Front Stance Right Straight Punch

Punch to the opponent's midsection at the same time the feet are switched. (Photograph 53)

Explanation of Movements 3 - 5 (Down Block, Roundhouse Hammer Fist, Straight Punch)



Photograph 54 Movement 3



Photograph 55 Movement 4



Photograph 56 Movement 5

Questions about the Hammer Fist

The common explanation for this technique is that when an opponent grabs your right wrist with his left hand, you swing your arm around to the inside in a clockwise direction to escape from his grip and then strike to the top of the head as the opponent leans forward. (Photographs 57, 58, and 59)

If the opponent grabs with all his might, it can be difficult to escape his grip easily using this method. If, on the other hand, this is for blocking an opponent's punch, it is also difficult to actually block a punch using a hammer fist.

Questions about the Straight Punch

As in movement 1 (down block) and movement 2 (straight punch), even if one were successful in striking the opponent to the top of the head, you would be too close to the opponent to execute an effective straight punch. (Photograph 60)



Photograph 57



Photograph 58



Photograph 59



Photograph 60



Photograph 61



Photograph 62

The Question of Differences between Styles

In Shotokan, the hammer fist is executed using a large arc to the swing. (Photograph 61)
In Shito Ryu the hammer fist is executed using a small arc to the swing. What is the real difference between these two methods?

Bunkai 1 : Escape from a Wrist Grab. Opponent Grabs with the Left Wrist



Photograph 63

Movement 3

Right Front Stance Right Down Block

An opponent grabs your right wrist.

(Photograph 63)

In a martial art, such as karate, which primarily uses strikes and punches, it is necessary to understand how to escape and evade grabs based on how you are grabbed.



Photograph 64

Movement 4

Half Back Stance Right Hammer Fist

By pulling the hand from the down block position directly toward the left ear it is possible to escape. (Photograph 64)

It is possible to escape because the opponent's thumb is in a weak position. In the book *Kempo Karate*, published in the late 1920's, this method of pulling the hand directly to the ear to escape is described.



Photograph 65

Strike the opponents face with a back fist.

(Photograph 65)



Photograph 66

Movement 5

Left Front Stance

Left Mid Section Straight Punch

Execute a left mid section straight punch while performing a switch step. (Photograph 66)

Oral Instruction : Escape from a Wrist Grab

If you are unable to escape from a wrist grab by swing the right hand and executing a hammer fist, it is because there is a problem with the direction in which you are attempting to swing your hand. When someone grabs you there is a tendency to create a kind of polarity in the body depending on which fingers they use. Because of this there is always one direction in which it is easier to move the opponent. Therefore if you ignore the directions of the fingers, you will not be able to take the opponent off balance. The two basic ways people grab are by using the first two fingers and the thumb (photograph 67), and the third and fourth fingers and the thumb. (photograph 68)

1 : Grabbing the opponent's right wrist using the first two fingers of the right hand



Photograph 67

2 : Grabbing the opponent's right hand using the third and fourth fingers



Photograph 68

Bunkai 2: Escape from a Wrist Grab 2. The Opponent Grabs Using the First Two Fingers



Photograph 69

Movement 3

Right Front Stance Right Down Block
Opponent grabs the right wrist using the first two fingers of the right hand. (Photograph 69)



Photograph 70

Movement 4

Half Back Stance Right Hammer Fist
Rotate the wrist vertically in a small arc. (Photograph 70)
If you rotate in a large arc, you will not be able to take the opponent off balance.



Photograph 71

Movement 5

Right Front Stance Left Mid Section Punch
Regrip the opponent's wrist while performing a switch step, and execute a left mid section punch. (Photographs 71 and 72)



Photograph 72

Bunkai 3 : Escape from a Wrist Grab 3. Opponent Grabs the Right Hand Using the Third and Fourth Fingers



Photograph 73

Movement 3

Right Front Stance Right Down Block

An opponent grabs the right wrist using the third and fourth and fourth fingers. (Photograph 73)



Photograph 74

Movement 4

Half Back Stance Right Hammer Fist

The opponent can be taken off balance if one makes a big arc when rotating the hand. (Photographs 74, 75, and 76)

Martial arts practiced on the mainland, such as kendo and judo, primarily employ the third and fourth fingers when grabbing. Okinawan karate employs the first and second fingers. It is believed that when karate was exported to the mainland, Shotokan changed the original form from a small arc rotation to a large arc to accommodate this difference.



Photograph 75

Movement 5

Right Front Stance Left Mid Section Punch

Regrip the opponent's wrist and execute a left mid section punch at the same time you switch your feet in a switch step. (Photograph 77)

Bunkai 2 and 3 illustrate the difference between Shito Ryu and Shotokan. Since both are appropriate depending on the situation, they are both correct.



Photograph 76



Photograph 77

Explanation for Movement 6 (Down Block)



Photograph 78 Movement 6

A down block can be used not only as a simple block, but also as a strike or a throw. Also a shift in the line of performance of the kata may indicate a throwing technique.

Oral Instruction : Double Twist

Double twist is the action of rotating the hips front to back in one count. It was named by Sensei Chojiro Tani, of Tani Ha Shito Ryu.

A simple way to do it is to stand in a horse stance (Photograph 79), relax your whole body, loosen your knees, pull back your right hip (Photographs 80 and 81), and push the right hip forward (Photographs 82 and 83). You should make a horizontal movement in one count so that your belt will swing and return. If you swing your arms as in the photographs, your arms and chest will relax. One may often hear that it is not good to swing your belt in practice. That is because you should try to make this movement as compact as possible for appearance's sake.



Photograph 79



Photograph 80



Photograph 81



Photograph 82



Photograph 83



Photograph 84

Bunkai 1 : Inside Throw



Photograph 85



Photograph 86

Movement 6**Left Front Stance Down Block**

A down block can be used as an inside throw in the case of a punch, or if your shoulder axis is set from a left rear diagonal angle. Step forward behind the opponent with your left leg, placing your hip close to the opponent's hip. Throw the opponent backwards with a left down block to the stomach or chest. It is easy to throw the opponent if you use a double twist when doing so.

(Photographs 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, and 90)



Photograph 87



Photograph 89



Photograph 88



Photograph 90

Explanation for Movements 6 - 9 (Upper Block)



Photograph 91 Movement 6



Photograph 92
Intermediary Movement



Photograph 93 Movement 7

Questions about the Upper Block

Have you ever wondered why in yakusoku kumite an upper block is generally performed while stepping back, but in katas it is usually performed while stepping forward? (Photographs 92 and 93)

Moreover, isn't it likely that, if an opponent attacks with a one? two combination, even if you could block an opponent's first punch with an upper block, his second punch would get in before you could counter? (Photographs 94 and 95)



Photograph 94



Photograph 95

Oral Instruction : The Front Hand is the Attacking Hand

I believe it is commonly thought that the front hand is for blocking and the back hand is for countering. It is true that many instructors teach this and it is written as such in many books about katas. It is, however, difficult to actually use in a real fighting situation. In other words, it is not practical to block then counter, because the opponent is not going to hit and wait. Oral instruction teaches that the front hand is for attacking. This is an extremely important concept for understanding katas. It is necessary through oral instruction to reenact the movements that have been removed for the sake of stylization.

Master Choki Motobu said that, "The blocking hand immediately becomes the attacking hand. Blocking with one hand and countering with the other hand is not true martial arts. A more advanced technique is for the block and the counter to be simultaneous. That is true martial arts."

He further stated that, "There is no combination attack against true Okinawan Karate. This is because if an attack is blocked using true Okinawan Karate, a second attack cannot be delivered."

This is the oral explanation for the reenactment of the cross counter punch, which was removed from the kata.

Oral Instruction : Block with Both Hands (Double Block)

A simple upper block is performed after crossing both arms in front of the body. This “crossing both arms is significant.” This movement represents the action that comes before the cross counter. In other words, against an opponent’s left upper straight punch move the right leg forward while using the palm of the left (back) hand to cross over from a lower position upward to toss the punch up and out, at the same time you perform a right upper block. In such a manner, it is possible to execute a fairly safe block against an opponent’s punch. Additionally, by bending your elbow the opponent’s arm will be pushed out from their body center and it is possible to execute a right cross counter punch to the opponent’s face. To summarize, this technique is a double block and cross counter punch.

It is thought that the double block is an application of instinct. If, for example a ball were to come from an unseen direction, most people would throw both arms up to protect their face. Thus it is a natural instinct to block with both hands.

Testing this idea, we get the following results.

- 1 : Blocking with one hand (blocking only). This results in a feeling of fear. (Photograph 96)
- 2 : Blocking with both hands (blocking only). This does not cause as much fear as with one hand only. (Photograph 97)
- 3 : Cross counter punch at the same time as performing a cross counter punch. The feeling of fear is lessened even further. (Photograph 98)



Photograph 96
Single handed Block



Photograph 97 Double handed



Block Photograph 98
Cross Counter

The Upper Block Found in Writings

This technique can be found in a drawing and photograph in the old book, Okinawan Karate Kempo, (1933) and a photograph of Master Choki Motobu in Choki Motobu and Ryukyu Karate, (Airyudo).



Except form Okinawan Karate Kempo, (1933)
Block enemy’s right punch with left arm and punch jaw.



Bunkai 1 : Cross Counter (inside)



Photograph 99

Movement 6

Left front Stance Left Down Block

Invite opponent's face punch by using a down block in the set position. (Photograph 99)



Photograph 100

Continuous Movements

In Shotokan after the 6th movement, there is a knife hand to the face. This represents the double parry block. Against an opponent's left face punch, you execute a cross parry block with the left hand while stepping forward with the right foot.

(Photographs 100 and 101)



Photograph 101

Movement 7

Right Front Stance Right Upper Block

Execute a counter punch to the face with the right upper block. It is easier if your right little finger of the blocking fist is pointing up.

(Photographs 101 and 102)



Photograph 102

Bunkai 2 : Cross Counter (Outside)



Photograph 103



Photograph 104



Photograph 105



Photograph 106

Movement 6

Left Front Stance Left Down Block

Invite the opponent's face punch by executing a down block and exposing the face.

(Photograph 103)

Continuous Movement

Execute a right upper block against the opponent's right face punch the same as the inside bunkai.

There is no need to change the stance. Block the opponent's punch to the outside with the left hand, while executing a switch step.

(Photographs 104 and 105)

This is easier if you step with the left foot slightly to the outside of the opponent.

Movement 7

Right Front Stance Right Upper block

Cross counter punch to the opponent's face from below their arm while performing a right upper block. (Photograph 106)

The following movements are the same as previously explained, so I will not touch on them.

Movement 8 Left Front Stance Left Upper Block

Movement 9 Right Front Stance Right Upper Block

Explanation for Movements 10 - 13 (Down Block, Straight Punch)

I will abbreviate because they are the same as movements 1 and 2.

Movement 10 Turn to the Back to the Right Left Front Stance Left Down Block

Movement 11 Right Front Stance to the Right Right Straight Punch

Movement 12 Right Front Stance to the Left Right Down Block

Movement 13 Left Front Stance to the Left Left straight Punch

Explanation for Movements 14 - 17 (Straight Punch)



Photograph 107 Movement 14



Photograph 108 Movement 15

Question about the Pulling Hand

Have you ever wondered why the pulling hand is important when executing a straight punch in karate? In boxing the hand that is not striking is held at the chin to protect the face. In karate, on the other hand, a punch is executed with no guard. We are taught that the pulling hand makes the punch stronger, but is this really true?

Oral Instruction : Grabbing Hand, Pulling Hand

The answer to this is clearly written in Funakoshi's *Karate do Kyohan* (published in 1935). In it he wrote, It (pulling hand) is a variation of a hook, one should grab the opponent's fist and pull it toward you as you attack. By pulling the opponent toward you, you will be able to shut down their technique, pull them off balance and moreover add power to your punch, which is the most important thing. It is more effective to twist as you pull the opponent toward you.

Bunkai 1 : Grab and Strike while Pulling the Opponent Toward You



Photograph 109

Movement 14

Left Front Stance Left Down Block



Photograph 110

Movement 15

Right Front Stance Right **Straight Punch**
Grab opponent with the left hand and execute a right straight punch while doing a switch step.
(Photographs 109 and 110)

I will abbreviate the following because they have been explained previously.

Movement 16 Left Front Stance to the Rear Left Mid Section Punch

Movement 17 Right Front Stance to the Rear Right Mid Section Punch

Explanation for Movements 18 - 19 (Knife hand block)



Photograph 111 Movement 18



Photograph 112 Movement 19

Questions about Knife Hand Blocks

Many katas, beginning with Heian Shodan, use a knife hand block. Is the technique meant to end only with a block along the line of performance? (Photograph 112)

It is said that the pulling hand is meant to represent the defense of the body. But is that really true?

How about the fact that the block is performed moving forward?

Oral Instruction : The Names for the Movements have been Disguised

Like the upper block this technique has been purposely misnamed. If you remain fixed on the terminology of this technique being a block then you will not be able to understand its bunkai.

Oral Instruction : There is no Technique that Ends with a Block

One should have doubts about any technique that ends with a block. Oral instruction states that there is no technique that ends with a block. Thus one must believe that there is some offensive technique hidden there. The four knife hand blocks to the left and right in both Heian Shodan and Heian Nidan are the same as in Kushanku, thus it is believed that they were taken from that kata. So, it is not correct to surmise that the four knife hand hidden there. The four knife hand blocks to the left and right in both Heian Shodan and Heian Nidan are the same as in Kushanku, thus it is believed that they were taken from that kata. So, it is not correct to surmise that the four knife hand blocks are there only for beginners because they are Heian katas (beginner katas).

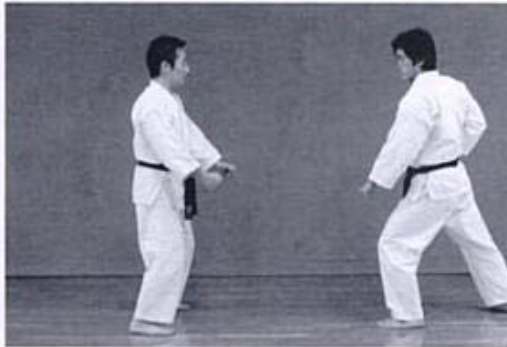
Oral Instruction : Block with Both Hands

Block the opponent's right straight punch with the palm of the right hand (back hand) to the outside, while moving the left leg a half step forward. Next continue to block the opponent's arm with the top of the left knife hand. (Photographs 113, 114, and 115)

Oral Instruction : Attack with the Front Hand Striking from the Shortest Distance

At the end of this block the fingers of the left hand are only 5 - 10 centimeters from the opponent's eyes. (Photograph 115) From this position if you change your hand to a bear claw, there is a high chance that you will be able to gouge the opponent's eyes. (Photograph 116)

Bunkai 1 : Knife Hand Block → Eye Gouge



Photograph 113



Photograph 114



Photograph 115



Photograph 116

Bunkai : Another Method

The Pulling Hand Hides a Groin Kick

When a knife hand block is performed, while in a back stance, it signifies a groin kick. When the opponent is attacked using an eye gouge, there is a tendency for them to duck out of the way. When doing so, their lower body opens up, making it easy to execute a groin kick.

This technique is explained with pictures in Karate do Dai Kan, published in 1938 by Sensei Shimpan Shiroma, a student of Master Itosu.

(Photographs 117 and 118)



Photograph 117



Photograph 118

Bunkai 2 : Knife Hand Block → Throw (Inside)



Photograph 119



Photograph 120



Photograph 121



Photograph 122

Movement 18

Right Back Stance Left Knife Hand Block
Block the opponent's right midsection punch.
Execute an eye gouge from that position with the
left hand. (Photographs 119, 120 and 121)



Photograph 123



Photograph 124



Photograph 125



Photograph 126

Movement 19

Left Back Stance Right Knife Hand Block

Since the opponent has moved back, grab their belt with the left hand while moving the right leg forward and pull them toward you. At the same time, strike their jaw with the palm of the right hand, and gouge their eyes.

(Photographs 122, 123, 124, 125 and 126)

Bunkai 3 : Knife Hand Block → Throw (outside)



Photograph 127



Photograph 128



Photograph 129



Photograph 130

Movement 18

Right Back Stance Left Knife Hand Block
Block the opponent's left straight punch with a left knife hand block to the outside.
(Photographs 127, 128 and 129)

Movement 19

Left Back Stance Right Knife Hand Block
Grab the opponent's left hand and moving the right leg forward thrust the right knife hand toward the their face and throw them.
(Photographs 130, 131, 132, 133 and 134)



Photograph 131



Photograph 132



Photograph 133



Photograph 134

I will abbreviate the following moves since they have been covered previously.

Movement 20 Back Stance to the Right Knife Hand Block

Movement 21 Left Back Stance at a Forty Five Degree Angle

Return

This is the end of the bunkai for Heian Shodan.

Heian Nidan

The Explanation for Bunkai Kumite

Heian Nidan was the first of the Heian series to be created, and was originally called Channan. If Channan was written with the Chinese characters "Southern priest", then we can surmise that it was named after the Chinese drifter who lived in Tomari. Master Anko Itosu and Master Kosaku Matsumora both learned from this person, and we can assume that this kata was learned from him at that time.

At first this kata was called Heian Shodan (first level). Shotokan, however, changed the name to Heian Nidan (second level) because it was considered more difficult since it has a kick.

The Main Points of Heian Nidan

1. Inside Block & Upper Block Counter Technique
2. Side Kick (Front Kick) Connective Techniques
3. Inside Block Front Kick Connective Technique
4. Nukite Strike from the closest possible distance
5. Down Block Upper Block Cross Counter

Heian Nidan

Heian Nidan



Ready (Yoi)



Movement 1



Movement 2



Movement 3



Movement 4



Movement 5



Movement 6



Connective Movement



Movement 7



Movement 8



Movement 9



Movement 10



Connective Movement



Movement 11



Movement 12



Movement 13



Movement 14



Movement 15



Movement 16



Movement 17

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Explanation for Movements 1 - 3 (Inside Block & Upper Block, Lower Punch, Hammer Fist)



Photograph 1 Movement 1



Photograph 2 Movement 2



Photograph 3 Movement 3



Photograph 4

Questions about the First Movement

This move is commonly explained as an inside block against an opponent's right straight punch. (Photograph 4)

If, however, it is possible to block a right straight punch, is the right upper block necessary? It is commonly explained as a preparation for the lower punch, but I do not believe this is a satisfactory explanation.

Oral Instruction : The Names of Techniques have been Disguised

Oral Instruction : The Front Hand is the Attacking Hand

According to these two points the leading inside block is really not a block, but an attack. It is either an upper punch or a back fist. The upper block can be assumed to be a block against an upper punch.

Oral Instruction : Immobilize the Opponent before Striking

Reenacting the movements according to these oral instructions it appears that the standard movements have been reversed. In other words, one blocks the opponent's left straight punch with a right upper block, and the left inside block is really an upper punch. (Photographs 5 and 6)



Photograph 5



Photograph 6 Back View

When I first heard this explanation from Sensei Kubota, it was a huge revelation. It was a further surprise when I was shown this photograph 7 of Master Funakoshi from his book *Karate do Kyohan*, published in 1935. His partner in the photograph is Master Hironori Otsuka, the founder of Wado Ryu.

This photograph, however, appears in the yakusoku kumite section, and is not shown as the explanation for Heian Nidan. For someone who knows bunkai, it is easy to see that this is “that part of that kata.” For those who do not know bunkai, I believe it would be difficult to connect it to the kata. It is likely that there are other techniques like this that are thought of as yakusoku kumite techniques, but not as the bunkai for kata.

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Photograph 7
Master Gichin Funakoshi (left) and Master Hironori Otsuka (right)



Photograph 8 Movement 4

Bunkai 1: Opponent Attacks with an Upper Straight Punch



Photograph 9



Photograph 10



Photograph 11

Movement 1

Right Back Stance

Left Inside Block & Right Upper Block

Block the opponent's left upper straight punch with a right upper block. The left inside block is an upper punch (back fist is okay). (Photograph 9)

Movement 2

Pull Left Hand to the Ear and Twist the Opponent's Arm Clockwise and Down

Following movement 1, grab and twist the opponent's arm clockwise and down to mid level. This will take the opponent off balance and he will not be able to launch a counter attack. Pull the left hand back to the ear in preparation for the fist attack. (Photograph 10)

Movement 3

Left Side Hammer Fist

Strike the opponent's head with a side hammer fist. (Photograph 11)



Photograph 19



Photograph 20

Explanation for Movements 4 - 8 (Double Block - Knife Hand Block)



Photograph 21 Movement 4



Photograph 22 Movement 5



Photograph 23 Movement 6



Photograph 24
Connecting Movement



Photograph 25 Movement 7



Photograph 26 Movement 8

The Question of Enemies in all Four Directions

It is commonly said that movements 4 through 6 are techniques which deal with an enemy to the right (photographs 21, 22, and 23), movement 7 deals with an enemy to the rear (photograph 25), and movement 8 deals with an enemy to the front (photograph 26). Is this, in fact, true?

Oral Instruction : There is Only One Opponent to the Front

It is possible to explain movements 4 through 9 as one continuous movement. The oral instruction for these movements teaches that there is only one opponent to the front. This is possible if we imagine that we are pulling the opponent around us in a kind of Copernicus Rotation.

Oral Instruction : The Front Hand is an Attack

Oral Instruction : The Names Given to Techniques have been Disguised

Oral Instruction : Immobilize the Opponent before Striking

Bunkai 1 : Movements 4 - 9 Against a Left Upper Straight Punch



Photograph 27



Photograph 28



Photograph 29



Photograph 30

Movement 4

Left Back Stance

Right Inside Block & Left Upper Block

Block the opponent's right upper straight punch with a left upper block. The right inside block is actually an upper punch, or back fist.

(Photographs 27 and 28)

Movement 5

Pull the Right Hand to the Left Ear, Twist the Opponent's Left Hand in a Counter Clockwise Direction Down to the Lower Level

Following movement 4, grab the opponent's right hand with your left hand and twist it downward in a counter clockwise direction. This will break the opponent's balance allowing you to launch a counter attack. (Photograph 29)

Movement 6

Right Side Hammer Fist

Execute a right side hammer fist to the opponent's head or neck. (Photograph 30)

Bunkai 1 : Movements 4 - 9



Photograph 31

Movement 7**Right Down Block & Right Side Kick**

A side kick may be used on its own, in some cases, but here it is really supposed to be a knee kick. After the hammer fist in movement 6, grab and pull the opponent's neck down while executing a right knee kick into their chest. (Photograph 31)



Photograph 32

Movement 8**Right Back Stance Left Knife Hand Block**

Change the opponent's right hand from your left hand to your right and twist it in a counter clockwise direction downward breaking the opponent's balance. (Photographs 32 and 33)



Photograph 33



Photograph 34

Move your left leg behind the opponent's back and throw them with your left knife hand.

(Photographs 34, 35, and 36)



Photograph 35



Photograph 36

Explanation for Movements 9 and 10

Please refer to the knife hand block in Heian Shodan.

Movement 9 Left Back Stance to the Front Right Knife Hand Block

Movement 10 Right Back Stance to the Front Left Knife Hand Block

Explanation for Movement 11 (Spear Hand)



Photograph 37
Connecting Movement



Photograph 38 Spear Hand

Questions about the Spear Hand

The spear hand is a traditional technique in karate. (Photograph 38)

There are stories that tell of such things as executing a spear hand to the opponent's abdomen and reaching in to their spine and pulling it out. Master Funakoshi, in his writings, however denied such stories. It might be possible to execute a spear hand to an opponent's abdomen if one strengthens their fingers enough, but it seems impossible that one would actually be able to use it to the chest, which is indicated as the correct target for the Heian Katas.

Oral Instruction : Block with Both Hands

By executing a chop to the elbow of the opponent's punching arm, it is possible to stop their attack momentarily. Grab the opponent's wrist with your left hand as they are stopped.

Oral Instruction : Cut the Forearm

Using the knife edge of the right hand (arm), press down horizontally on the top of the bony part of the opponent's forearm, causing enough pain for them to fall down.

Oral Instruction : Strike from the Shortest Distance

By executing the spear hand from about 5 centimeters it is possible not to jam your fingers.



Photograph 50



Photograph 51



Photograph 52

Immediately throw the opponent backwards using a double twist motion.
(Photographs 50, 51 and 52)

Explanation for Movements 12 - 15 (Knife Hand Block)

Please refer to the explanation for Heian Shodan.

Movement 12 Right Back Stance to the Right Right Knife Hand Block

Movement 13 Right Back Stance 45 Degrees to the Right Right Knife Hand Block

Movement 14 Left Back Stance to the Left Right Knife Hand Block

Movement 15 Right Back Stance 45 Degrees to the Left Right Knife Hand Block

Movements 16 - 21 (Inside Block, Front Kick, Reverse Punch)



Photograph 53 Movement 16



Photograph 54 Movement 17



Photograph 55 Movement 18



Photograph 56 Movement 19



Photograph 57 Movement 20



Photograph 58 Movement 21

Questions about the Inside Block

The inside block (also called outside or side block depending on the style) is the most common blocking technique found in this kata. Despite its importance, it is rarely performed well. Often the opponent's punch gets in to the inside.

Oral Instruction : Block with Both Hands. Double Block

By blocking with both hands this block becomes quite effective. Parry across the inside, knocking the opponent's punch off its line of movement, immediately following with an inside block. (Photographs 59 and 60)



Photograph 59



Photograph 60

Oral Instruction : Perform a Two Count Movement in One Count

In the kata the inside block and front kick are performed in two counts, but in fact they should be performed at the same time.

Bunkai 1 : Against a Left Straight Punch (To the Inside)



Photograph 61



Photograph 62



Photograph 63

Movement 16

Left Front Stance Right Inside Block

Movement 17

Right Front Kick

Perform a right front kick together with a right inside block against the opponent's left straight punch. (Photographs 61 and 62)

Movement 18

Right Front

Left Mid Section Reverse Punch

Grab the opponent's left hand with the right hand, and execute a right reverse punch while pulling the opponent toward you. (Photograph 63)

Movements 19 - 22 Explanation for the Right Double Handed Block



Photograph 67 Movement 19



Photograph 68 Movement 20



Photograph 69 Movement 21



Photograph 70 Movement 22

Questions about the Double Handed Block

Why is the left hand placed against the elbow? (Photograph 70)

Also, why is there no attack after the block?

Oral Instruction : The Names given to Techniques are Disguised

The movement that is called a double handed block is not actually a blocking technique.

Oral Instruction : There are no Techniques that End in a Block

Since the line of performance ends with the double handed block, it is natural that it really isn't a block.

Oral Instruction : Grabbing Hand

The hand that is supporting the elbow is actually grabbing the opponent.

Bunkai 1 : Against a Right Straight Punch (An Uppercut to the Inside)



Photograph 71



Photograph 72



Photograph 73



Photograph 74

Movement 19

Right Front Stance Left Inside Block

Movement 20

Left Front Kick

Perform a left front kick together with a left inside block against and opponent's right straight punch.

(Photographs 71 and 72)

Movement 21

Left Front Stance

Right Mid Section Reverse Punch

Grab the opponent's right hand with your left hand, and execute a right reverse punch.

(Photograph 73)

Movement 22

Right Front Stance Right Double Handed Block

Following the mid section reverse punch, step in with the right leg and execute a right upper cut. (Photograph 74)

Explanation for Movements 23 - 26 (Down Block, Upper Block)



Photograph 79 Movement 23



Photograph 80
Connecting Movement



Photograph 81 Movement 24



Photograph 82 Movement 25



Photograph 83
Connecting Movement



Photograph 84 Movement 26

Questions about the Down Block and Upper Block

Again we must ask why this movement ends with a block (Upper Block). (Photographs 81 and 84) It is said that the upper block is meant to break the opponent's arm. It is difficult, though, I believe to actually break someone's arm with an upper block at that point.

Oral Instruction : The Set Position is an Invitation

The first down block is explained as a block against a front kick, but in this case it is used to draw the opponent's attack. If you know where the opponent will attack, it is easy to defend against it.

Oral Instruction : There is no Movement that Ends with a Block

As before, the upper block is an attack.

Oral Instruction : The Names for Techniques have been Disguised

Oral Instruction : Use a Switch Step

It is easy to perform the bunkai for this if you slide your foot to the side using a switch step when raising the knife hand during the connecting movement. (Photograph 86)

Bunkai 1 : Deflect The Punch and Execute a Hook



Photograph 85



Photograph 86



Photograph 87



Photograph 88

Movement 23

Left Front Stance Left Down Block

This down block invites the upper level attack. It is easy to defend against an attack you know is coming. (Photograph 85)

Connecting Movement

Left Upper Knife Hand Block

Deflect the opponent's right upper level straight punch diagonally upward from the outside with the heel of the left hand. (Photographs 86 and 87)

Movement 24

Right Front Stance Right Upper Block

Using a switch step, execute a right hook to the face. (Photograph 88)

Bunkai 2 : Throw



Photograph 89



Photograph 90



Photograph 91



Photograph 92

Movement 23

Left Front Stance Left Down Block

This down block is inviting an upper level attack. It can also be used to block an opponent's right front kick. (Photograph 89)

Connecting Movement

Left Upper Knife Hand Block

Deflect the opponent's right upper straight punch across and up with the heel of the left hand. (Photographs 90 and 91)

Movement 24

Right Front Stance Right Upper Block

Using a switch step move the right hand in around the opponent's punch to their head, and bend their neck to the side trapping the head to the shoulder, and throw them to the rear. (Photographs 92, 93 and 94)

Push on the opponent's hip with the left hand and raise the right elbow and point the right hand downward.



Photograph 93



Photograph 94

The following have been explained so I will not repeat.

Movement 25 Right Front Stance to the Right Right Down Block

Connecting Movement Right Upper Knife Hand Block

Movement 26 Right Front Stance 45 Degrees to the Left Left Upper Block

Finish

This is all of the explanations for Heian Nidan.

Heian Sandan

The Explanation for Bunkai Kumite

Heian Sandan deals with close in fighting. It is a rather plain kata, but it has many applications for self-defense.

The Main Points of Heian Sandan

1. Cross Block

Switch Step

2. Circular Hammer

Grab then Punch

3. Arm Block

Outside Hand

4. Round House Punch & Elbow Strike

Three Types of Throws

Heian Sandan

Heian Sandan



Ready (Yoi)



Movement 1



Movement 2



Movement 3



Movement 4



Movement 5



Movement 6



Movement 7



Movement 8



Connected Movement



Movement 9



Movement 10



Movement 11



Movement 12



Movement 13



Movement 14



Movement 15



Movement 16



Movement 17



Connecting Movement



Movement 18



Connecting Movement



Movement 19



Movement 20



Finish (Naore)

Heian Sandan

Bunkai 1 : Arm Twist (Fushu)



Photograph 4



Photograph 5



Photograph 6



Photograph 7

Movement 1

Right Back Stance Left Inside Block

Using the bottom of the right palm, block and push the opponent's left straight punch across from right to left. Immediately perform an inside block with the left hand. (Photographs 4 and 5)

Movement 2

Closed Stance Cross Block

Grab the opponent's left hand with the left blocking hand as you move your right foot forward. Pull the opponent in and execute a right back fist. The opponent will use his free right hand to protect against the back fist. (Photographs 6 and 7)

Movement 3

Cross Block

Grab the opponent's right hand with the same right hand that was used for a back fist. Turn it clockwise and downward, twisting both of the opponent's arms into a cross so that he cannot escape or attack. Execute a left back fist to the face. (Photograph 8)



Photograph 8

Explanation for Movements 4 - 7 (Inside Block - Reinforced Block)



Photograph 9 Movement 4



Photograph 10 Movement 5



Photograph 11 Movement 6



Photograph 12 Movement 7

Heian Sandan

Oral Instruction : There is One Opponent to the Front
Movement 7 follows movement 6 as a throwing technique.

Bunkai : Hand Net Throw (Karami nage)

Movement 4 Left Back Stance to the Right Right Inside Block

Block the opponent's right straight punch from the left to the right with the bottom of the left fist, as you move into a left back stance. Immediately execute a right inside block. (Photographs 13 and 14)

Movement 5 Closed Stance to the Right Cross Block

Grab the opponent's right hand with the blocking hand and pull him toward you, and execute a left back fist to the face as you move your left foot forward. Since the opponent's right hand is being held, he will try to block the back fist with the free left hand. (Photograph 15)

Movement 6 Closed Stance to the Right Cross Block

Grab the opponent's left hand with your left hand, and pull in and down, twisting it in a counter clockwise direction. Force both of the opponent's hands into a cross so that he cannot attack and execute a right back fist to the face. (Photograph 16)

Movement 7 Left Front Stance to the Front Reinforced Block

After executing the right back fist in movement 6, grab the opponent's right wrist from below with the right hand. (Photograph 17) Throw the opponent by moving the left foot forward to the front at a 90degree angle while locking the opponent's elbow joint backwards. (Photographs 18, 19, and 20)

Explanation for Movements 8 - 10 (Escape - Straight Punch)



Photograph 21 Movement 8



Photograph 22
Connecting Movement



Photograph 23 Movement 9



Photograph 24 Movement 10

Heian Sandan

Questions : Concerning the Revolving Hammer Fist

Is this technique really supposed to damage the opponent by striking him in the back with a hammer fist?

Where is the straight punch that follows supposed to strike?

Oral Instruction : Break the Opponent's Balance Toward the Tip of a Triangle

It is easy to break the opponent's balance by pulling him toward the tip of a triangle that is in line with his two feet.

Oral Instruction : Switch Step

The problem of distance can be solved by using a switch step. The hammer fist and straight punch can also be used as a throw.

Bunkai 2 : Back Hand Blow, Foot Sweep to the Rear



Photograph 29



Photograph 30



Photograph 31



Photograph 32

Movement 8

Right Spear Hand

The opponent grabs your right wrist.

(Photograph 29)

Connecting Movement

Move the Right Spear Hand Diagonally Downward

The idea of this technique is to break the opponent's balance by leaning the upper body forward and moving the right knife hand diagonally downward. Move the hand down in the direction toward the tip of an imaginary triangle whose base is the opponent's two feet. (Photograph 30)

Movement 9

Horse Stance Left Hammer Fist

Using the front foot as an axis, move the back foot around clockwise with a switch step, move into a horse stance, and execute a hammer fist to the opponent's head. At this point it should be easy to remove your hand from the opponent's grip if you were able to break their grip using the connecting movement. (Photograph 31)

Movement 10

Right Front Stance Right Straight Punch

Grab the opponent's collar with the same hand that you executed a hammer fist, and pull him toward you. (Photograph 32)



Photograph 41

Movement 10

Right Front Stance Right Straight Punch

Execute a right straight punch to the opponent's head as you take a step forward.

(Photographs 41, 42 and 43)



Photograph 42



Photograph 43

Explanation for Movement's 11 - 17 (Arm Block, Back Fist)



Photograph 44 Movement 12



Photograph 45 Movement 13



Photograph 46 Movement 14

Questions: Concerning the Arm Block and Back Fist

Is this actually a simple block with the elbow followed by a back fist?

(Photographs 44 and 45)

Oral Instruction: Block with Both Hands

The block should not be performed with just the elbow. Use the rear hand to make a horizontal cross block.

Oral Instruction: The Grabbing Hand

Grab the opponent's punch with the rear hand so they cannot escape.

Oral Instruction: Switch Step

The purpose of the repeated elbow blocks is to practice the in and out body movement and throw against an attack.



Photograph 51



Photograph 52



Photograph 53



Photograph 55



Photograph 54



Photograph 56

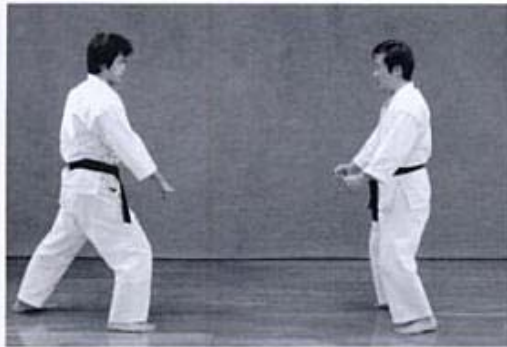
Movement 14

Horse Stance Left Elbow Block

Pull the right leg back and switch your body position. At the same time bring the right knife hand down in a slicing motion "folding the arm" and throw the opponent.

(Photographs 53, 54, 55 and 56)

Bunkai 2 : Arm Fold Throw



Photograph 57



Photograph 58



Photograph 59



Photograph 60

Movement 12

Horse Stance Right Elbow Block

Block the opponent's left mid level punch from the shortest distance when your hands are in a lowered position. In the kata the fists are kept on the hips. In fact, though, you execute the right arm block by bringing the front hand perpendicular to the ground and rotating it inward. The left hand moves to form a sideways cross block and grabs the left punch from the top.

(Photographs 57 and 58)

Movement 13

Horse Stance Right Back Fist

Execute a right back fist to the opponent's face while pulling his left punching hand toward you with the left hand. If the opponent blocks the back fist with their right hand, grab it with the right hand after executing the back fist.

(Photographs 59 and 60)



Photograph 61

Connecting Movement

Step in with the Right Leg

Twist the opponent's arm in a cross so that he cannot launch another attack while stepping in with the left leg.

(Photographs 61, 62 and 65 rear view)



Photograph 62



Photograph 65 Rear View



Photograph 63

Movement 14

Horse Stance Left Arm Block

Get into a horse stance by pulling the right foot back, and throw the opponent by moving your hands forward. (Photographs 63, 64 and 65)



Photograph 64



Photograph 65

Explanation for Movements 16 - 18 (Arm Block, Back Fist, Straight Punch)



Photograph 67 Movement 16



Photograph 68 Movement 17



Photograph 69
Connecting Movement



Photograph 70 Movement 18

Heian Sandan

Question

What is the target of the straight punch (movement 18)?

Oral Instruction : Grabbing Hand

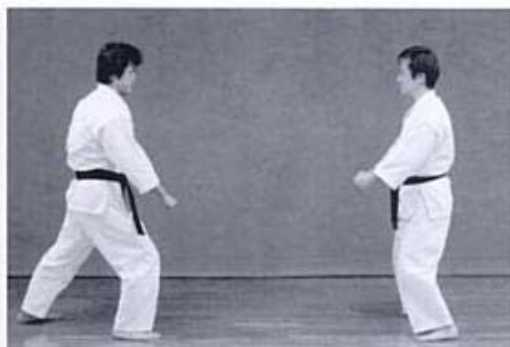
The open hand of the connecting movement is to grab the opponent's hand.

Oral Instruction : Block with Both Hands

Oral Instruction : Switch Step

Execute the straight punch as you grab the opponent's hand and perform a switch step.

Bunkai 1 : From the Back Fist to the Straight Punch



Photograph 71



Photograph 72



Photograph 73



Photograph 74

Movement 16

Horse Stance Right Elbow Block

Block the opponent's left mid level punch from shortest possible distance while the hands are in a ready position, rotating the right arm inward. Move the left hand across to form a horizontal cross and grab the opponent's wrist from above. (Photographs 71 and 72)

Movement 17

Horse Stance Right Back Fist

Execute a back fist to the opponent's face while pulling the left hand toward you. (Photograph 73)

Connecting Movement

Left Front Stance Right Open Hand

Open the right hand after executing the back fist and grab the opponent's collar. (Photograph 74)

Movement 18

Left Front Stance Left Straight Punch

Execute a right straight punch to the opponent's face while performing a switch step. (Photographs 75 and 76)



Photograph 75



Photograph 76

Bunkai 2 : Foot Sweep to the Front



Photograph 77



Photograph 78



Photograph 79



Photograph 80

Movement 16

Horse Stance Right Elbow Block

Block the opponent's left mid level straight punch by moving the arm perpendicular to the ground and rotating it inward. At the same time move the left hand across to form a horizontal cross and grab the opponent's left wrist from the top. (Photographs 77 and 78)

Movement 17

Horse Stance Right Back Fist

Execute a right back fist to the opponent's face while pulling him toward you. (Photograph 79)

Connecting Movement

Right Front Stance Right Open Hand

After executing the right back fist open the hand and grab the opponent's collar. Move your left foot next to the opponent's left foot. (Photograph 80)



Photograph 81



Photograph 82



Photograph 83



Photograph 84

Movement 18

Left Front Stance Left Straight Punch

Still holding on to the opponent's collar, it is possible to throw him to the front by moving the right leg in front of the opponent's left leg and sweep him using a slicing motion to the rear. Then execute a straight punch to the opponent's head. (Photographs 81, 82, 83 and 84)

Bunkai 1 : When Your Left Hand is Grabbed



Photograph 88



Photograph 89



Photograph 90



Photograph 91

This bunkai applies when the left straight punch (Movement 18) has been grabbed.

Movement 18

Left Front Stance Left Straight Punch

Your left wrist has been grabbed by the opponent.
(Photograph 88)

Connecting Movement

Pull the Rear Foot Back and Align it Parallel to the Front Foot

This is the connecting movement.
(Photographs 89 and 90)

Movement 19

Horse Stance

Right Elbow Strike and Right Rear Swing Punch

Grab the opponent's wrist with the right hand and hold it so tight so he cannot escape. Using the left leg as the axis, rotate the right leg around to the left, going under the opponent's arm and control him by twisting the arm and pushing upward.
(Photograph 91)

Explanation for Movements 19 - 20 (Rear Elbow Strike Rear Swing Punch)



Photograph 92 Movement 19



Photograph 93 Movement 20

Question

The common explanation for this movement is that it is an elbow strike and swing punch to the rear against an opponent who is grabbing you from the rear. That is, however, difficult to actually do.

Oral Instruction : Perform a Movement that is Shown as Two

The reason this is difficult to execute is that each movement is performed separately in the kata. The two movements should be performed as one set. Movement 19 (photograph 92) breaks the opponent's balance and movement 20 (Photograph 93) is the offensive technique.

Oral Instruction : Double Twist

Oral Instruction : Hang the Opponent to Sky

Please refer to bunkai 1.

Oral Instruction : Take the Opponent's Back

Please refer to bunkai 2.

Bunkai 1 : Escape from the Side and Control from the Opposite Side

Movement 19 Horse Stance Left Elbow Strike and Right Swing Punch

When you are grabbed from behind, strike to the rear with the left elbow. (You do not need to actually hit the opponent.) Execute a right swing punch, by bringing the elbow out to the front and loosen the grip of the opponent. Grab the opponent's left wrist with your right hand. (Photographs 94 and 95)

Movement 20 Move Horizontally to the Left. Horse Stance Right Elbow Strike and Left Swing Punch to the Rear

Push the opponent's left arm upward with the left hand in an upper block type movement. By bringing the opponent's wrist over your head and then moving to the right side and bringing it down to mid level, it is possible to control the opponent in a fore arm twist. (Photograph 96)

This is the extent of the kata bunkai. From here I have improvised. (Photographs 97, 98, 99, 100 and 101)

Bunkai 1: Escape to the Side and Control from the Opposite Side



Photograph 94



Photograph 98



Photograph 95



Photograph 99



Photograph 96



Photograph 100



Photograph 97



Photograph 101

Bunkai 2 : Escape to the Rear



Photograph 102



Photograph 103



Photograph 104



Photograph 105

Movement 19

Left Elbow Strike and Right Swing Punch to the Rear

When grabbed from the rear, loosen the opponent's grip by executing a right elbow strike to the front. At the same time move the left foot to the left. (Photographs 102 and 103)

Movement 20

Right Elbow Strike and Left Swing Punch

Step with the right foot to the rear of the opponent. Loosen the opponent's grip with the left hand and execute a right elbow strike to his chest. At the same time throw the opponent to the rear using a double twist.

(Photographs 104, 105, 106, 107 and 108)



Photograph 106



Photograph 107



Photograph 108



Photograph 113



Photograph 114

This is the end of the bunkai kumite for Heian Sandan.

Heian Yodan

The Explanation for Bunkai Kumite

This kata is comprised of techniques taken from the katas Bassai, Kanku (Kushanku) and Jion. It has the most kicking techniques of any of the Heian katas.

The Main Points of Heian Yodan

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| 1. Various Kicks | Front Kick, Side Kick, Knee Kick |
| 2. Blocking With Both Hands | Method of Intersecting |
| 3. Upper and Lower Knife Hand Block-Back Fist | Pull the Opponent Around and Strike |
| 4. Wedge Block | Grab and Kick |

Heian Yodan



Ready (Yoi)



Movement 1



Movement 2



Movement 3



Movement 4



Movement 5



Movement 6



Movement 7



Movement 8



Movement 9



Movement 10



Movement 11



Movement 12



Movement 13



Movement 14



Movement 15



Movement 16



Movement 17



Movement 18



Movement 19

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Movement 20



Movement 21



Movement 22



Movement 23



Movement 24



Movement 25



Movement 26



Movement 27



Movement 28



Movement 29



Finish (Naore)

Explanation for Movement 1 (Double Knife Hand Block)



Photograph 1 Ready



Photograph 2 Movement 1

Question

Why does this technique end with a block? (Photograph 2)

If the right knife hand is actually a hidden strike, why is it not included in the kata itself?

Oral Instruction : There is no Technique that Ends with a Block

Oral Instruction : The Names Given to Techniques have been Disguised

Oral Instruction : The Front Hand is the Attacking Hand

This is the same as in Heian Nidan, but the front hand is a knife hand. The palm of the hand strikes the opponent's chin and then if you bend the fingers it is possible to strike the eyes. In that manner, it is unlikely that you will jam your fingers and the odds of striking the eyes are high. This is a highly effective technique since even a small piece of dust in the eye causes you to stop your movement.

Bunkai 1 : Palm Strike, Eye Gouge



Photograph 3



Photograph 4



Photograph 5



Photograph 6

Movement 1

Right Back Stance

Left Knife Hand Block and Right Upper Knife Hand

Move into a right back stance against an opponent's left upper level straight punch and execute an upper level knife hand block while striking the chin with the left palm. Follow with a bear claw and strike the opponent's eyes.

(Photographs 3 and 4)

(Rear View : Photographs 5 and 6)

Explanation for Movement's 2 - 4 (Double Knife Hand Block, Lower Cross Block, Reinforced Block)



Photograph 7 Movement 2



Photograph 8 Movement 3



Photograph 9 Movement 4

Question

Why are there two blocks, a lower cross block (Photograph 8) and a reinforced block (Photograph 9), following each other?

Oral Instruction : The Front Hand is the Attacking Hand

Oral Instruction : There is no Technique that Ends with a Block

Oral Instruction : There is Only One Opponent to the Front

Movement 2 (an opponent to the right) and movement 3 (an opponent to the front) are not actually against different opponents, but, rather are connected movements against the same opponent.

Oral Instruction : The principle of a Lever

Use one hand to hold on to the opponent's wrist while using the other hand to break their balance. From movement 2 throw the opponent or execute an upper cut.

Oral Instruction : The Names Given to Techniques have been Disguised

The lower cross block is a throw. The reinforced block is an attack.

Bunkai 1: Throwing the Opponent



Photograph 10



Photograph 11



Photograph 12

Movement 2

Right Back Stance

Right Knife Hand and Left Upper Knife Hand Block

Block the opponent's right upper straight punch using a left upper knife hand block, while executing a right palm strike to the chin. Then form a bear claw and execute an eye strike.

(Photographs 10 and 11)

Movement 3

Left Front Stance Lower Cross Block

The left hand grabs the opponent's right wrist, and the right hand grabs the opponent's elbow. Move the left foot toward the front while bringing your hand into the side of the opponent. (Perpendicular to the opponent's right foot) Throw him while moving the hands as if you were scratching him vertically. (Photographs 12, 13, 14 and 15)



Photograph 14



Photograph 13



Photograph 15



Photograph 20



Photograph 21

Movement 4

Left Back Stance Right Reinforced Block

This technique should be used when the opponent won't let you throw him.

Since the opponent is right in front of you, continue to hold onto his wrist with the left hand and execute a right upper cut (or back fist) to the face, while moving the right foot in toward the opponent. (Photographs 20 and 21)

This case is likely to happen, and this is an effective follow up.

Bunkai 1 : Low Side Kick, Elbow Strike



Photograph 28



Photograph 29



Photograph 30



Photograph 31

Movement 8

Closed Stance Left Kamae

Connecting movement.

Movement 9

Right Down Block and Right Side Kick

Against an opponent's left mid level punch, execute a right down block and side kick to the hip joint or groin. (Photographs 28, 29 and 30)

If you kick the lower level, the opponent's upper body will lean forward (Photograph 31), and you will be able to counter with an elbow strike. In this technique the kick is not meant to finish off the opponent, but rather to stop the opponent so you can execute another technique.

Movement 10

Right Front Stance Left Elbow Strike

Execute a left elbow strike as you cradle the opponent's head and pull him toward you.

(Photographs 32 and 33)



Photograph 32



Photograph 33

Explanation for Movements 8 - 14 (Side Kick - Back Fist)



Photograph 34 Movement 8



Photograph 35 Movement 9



Photograph 36 Movement 10



Photograph 37 Movement 11



Photograph 38 Movement 12



Photograph 39 Movement 13



Photograph 40 Movement 14

Question

Is the upper and lower kamae really a kamae?

Oral Instruction : There is Only One Opponent to the Front

In the technique after the elbow strike, you pull the opponent around and attack again. You do not execute an elbow strike to the right and then execute a knife hand strike to a different opponent to the front, but rather continue to control the opponent after executing the elbow strike then pull him around to the front and attack again.

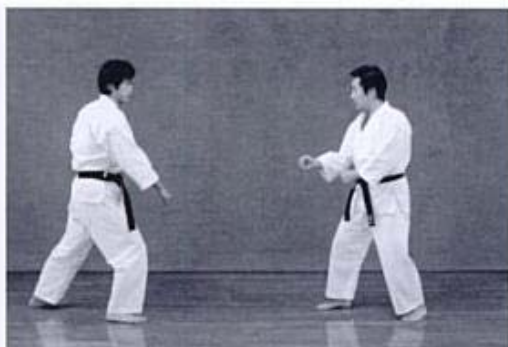
Oral Instruction : The Principle of a Lever

This refers to breaking an opponent's balance while holding on to them.

Oral Instruction : Take the Opponent's Back

The knife hand strike is executed to the back of the opponent's neck, so they cannot see this technique. The next front kick and back fist are also executed from the rear so the opponent cannot see those techniques either.

Bunkai 1 : Pull the Opponent Around and Attack



Photograph 41

Movement 8

Closed Stance Left Kamae

Connecting movement.



Photograph 42

Movement 9

Right Down Block and Right Side Kick

Against the opponent's left mid level punch execute a right down block and a right side kick to the hip joint or groin at the same time.

(Photographs 41, 42 and 43)



Photograph 43



Photograph 44

When you execute the low kick, the opponent will lean forward and the elbow block can be used as a counter technique. (Photograph 44)



Photograph 45



Photograph 46



Photograph 47



Photograph 48

Movement 10

Right Front Stance Left Elbow Strike

Cradle the opponent's head and execute a right elbow strike to the face while pulling him toward you. (Photograph 45)

Movement 11

Left Lower Level Knife Hand and Right Upper Level Knife Hand

After executing the left elbow strike grab the opponent's left wrist with the same hand and pull him downward. (Photograph 46)

Movement 12

Left Upper Knife Hand and Right Knife Hand Strike

Without stopping the opponent's hand bring it upward in a circular motion. Execute a right knife hand strike to the back of the opponent's neck. (Photograph 47)

Movement 13

Right Front Kick

Next execute a right mid level front kick to the opponent's wide open ribs while holding his arm. (Photograph 48)



Photograph 49



Photograph 50

Movement 14

Cross Stance Back Fist

Step in with the right leg after the kick and execute a right upper cut going under the opponent's left arm. (Photographs 49 and 50)



Photograph 63

Movement 17

Right Front Stance Right Straight Punch
Pull the opponent down with the left hand and execute a right straight punch to his lowered head.
(Photograph 63)



Photograph 64

Movement 18

Right Front Stance Left Reverse Punch
Then execute a left reverse punch to the head.
(Photograph 64)

I will abbreviate the following since they repeat the previous techniques.

Movement 19 Left Back Stance Diagonally to the Right Double Hand Kamae

Movement 20 Left Front Kick Diagonally to the Right

Movement 21 Left Front Stance Diagonally to the Right Left Straight Punch

Movement 22 Left Front Stance Diagonally to the Right Right Reverse Punch

Explanation for Movement's 23 - 25 (Double Hand Block)



Photograph 65 Movement 23



Photograph 66 Movement 24



Photograph 67 Movement 25

Question

Why are there three blocks moving forward in a row? Why are they not just inside blocks, but reinforced blocks?

Oral Instruction : Names Given to Techniques have been Disguised

Oral Instruction : Switch Step

Oral Instruction : The Front Hand is the Attacking Hand

Oral Instruction : Meoto Hand

This technique is used by moving both hands. The supporting hand grabs and pulls.

Bunkai 1 : Pull the Opponent in and Execute a Back Fist



Photograph 68



Photograph 69



Photograph 70



Photograph 71

Movement 23

Right Back Stance Left Double Hand Block
Block the opponent's left straight punch with a left double hand block (Photographs 68 and 69)

Movement 24

Left Back Stance Right Double Hand Block
Execute a right back fist as you pull the opponent's left hand toward you with your left hand using a switch step. (Photographs 70 and 71)

Explanation for Movements 26 and 27 (Knee Kick)



Photograph 72 Movement 26



Photograph 73 Movement 27

Bunkai 1 : Grab the Opponent and Execute a Knee Kick



Photograph 74

Movement 26

Front Stance

Both Hands Reach to the Front

It is possible to execute a knee kick following the double hand block.

Grab the opponent's head or shoulders.

(Photograph 74)



Photograph 75

Movement 27

Right Knee Kick

Execute a right knee kick as you pull the opponent toward you. (Photograph 75)

Hidden Technique : A head butt is very effective in close in fighting.

Explanation for Movements 28 and 29 (Knife Hand Block)

This knife hand block is for zanshin (keeping your attention on the fallen opponent).

Movement 28 Turn Right Back Stance Left Knife Hand Block

Movement 29 Left Back Stance Right Knife Hand Block

Return

This is all of the bunkai kumite for Heian Yodan.

Heian Godan

The Explanation for Bunkai Kumite

This kata is comprised of techniques taken from the katas Chinto, Passai and Kushanku. The first hook punch and the manji kamae at the end seem meaningless, but there are actually hidden applications in them.

The Main Points of Heian Godan

1. Hook Punch

Neck Throw

2. Cross Block

Grabbing Hand

3. Fan Kick

Stopping

4. Jump, Lower Cross Block

Opposite Hand One Arm Back Throw

5. Manji Kamae

Defending Against A Kick



Movement 15



Movement 16



Movement 17



Movement 18



Movement 19



Movement 20



Movement 21



Movement 22



Movement 23



Movement 24



Movement 25



Movement 26



Movement 27



Movement 28



Finish (Naore)

Explanation for Movements 1 - 3 (Inside Block, Reverse Punch, Hook Punch)



Photograph 1 Movement 1



Photograph 2 Movement 2



Photograph 3 Movement 3

Question

After the reverse punch, where is the hook punch aimed? (Photograph 3)

Some people say that the hook punch is a kamae. What would this be a kamae for?

Oral Instruction : The names for techniques have been disguised

The hook punch is not a kamae.

Oral Instruction : Changing directions signifies a throw

When the direction is changed while executing a hook punch, it means there is a throw.

Oral Instruction : There is one opponent to the front

The opponent is the same for the reverse punch and the hook punch.

Bunkai 1 : Hook Punch



Photograph 4



Photograph 5



Photograph 6



Photograph 7

Movement 1

Right Back Stance Left Inside Block

Block the opponent's left punch with a left inside block. (Photographs 4 and 5)

Movement 2

Left Front Stance

Right Center Reverse Punch

While pulling in opponent's left hand with your left, shift to a front stance and execute a right reverse punch to the opponent's side. (Photograph 6)

Movement 3

Bring in your right foot into a Closed Stance

Left Hook Punch

While pulling in the sleeve or shoulder of opponent with your right hand, move back leg toward front leg and throw a left hook punch. (Photograph 7)

Bunkai 2 : Neck Throw



Photograph 8



Photograph 9



Photograph 10



Photograph 11

Movement 1

Right Back Stance Left Inside Block

Block the opponent's left punch with a left inside block. (Photographs 8 and 9)

Movement 2

Left Front Stance

Right Center Reverse Punch

While drawing in opponent's left hand with your left hand, shift to a front stance and execute a right reverse punch to the opponent's side. (Photograph 10)

Movement 3

Bring in your right foot into a Closed Stance

Right Hook Punch

Shift back leg to the front, place your left hand over opponent's neck, break opponent's balance by pushing the opponent's waist with the right hand, and throw the opponent by drawing in your left hand. (Photographs 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15)



Photograph 12



Photograph 13



Photograph 14



Photograph 15

This bunkai is the same as that shown by Master Funakoshi in his books and is shown below. (Photograph 16)

This is an excerpt from Master Gichin Funakoshi's book *Rentan Goshin Karate Jutsu* (1925).



Photograph 16

Explanation for Movements 4 - 7 (Inside Block, Reverse Punch, Hook Punch, Reinforced Block)



Photograph 17 Movement 4



Photograph 18 Movement 5



Photograph 19 Movement 6



Photograph 20 Movement 7

Question

Where is the hook punch aimed?

Is the hook punch a kamae?

Oral Instruction : The names for techniques have been disguised

Oral Instruction : The front hand is the attacking hand

The front hand of the reinforced block is an attack.

Oral Instruction : There is One Opponent in Front

Movements 4 - 7 are all aimed at one opponent.

Bunkai 1 : Follow up to the Reinforced Block



Photograph 21



Photograph 22



Photograph 23



Photograph 24

Movement 4

Left Back Stance Right Inside Block

Block the opponent's right straight punch with a right inside block. (Photographs 21 and 22)

Movement 5

Left Front Stance Left Reverse Punch

Execute a left reverse punch into the opponent's side. (Photograph 23)

Movement 6

Draw in the Left Foot Right Hook Punch

Draw in the opponent's shoulder with the left hand, and shift the back foot to the front. Execute a right hook punch toward the opponent's head. (Photograph 24)

Movement 7

Left Back Stance Reinforced Block

The previous movement has forced the opponent off balance to the left. Step out with right foot and execute a right upper punch to the opponent's chin. (Photograph 25)



Photograph 25

Explanation for Movements 8 - 12 (Cross Block - Straight Punch)



Photograph 26 Movement 8



Photograph 27 Movement 9



Photograph 28 Movement 10



Photograph 29 Movement 11



Photograph 30 Movement 12

Oral Instruction : Block with two hands

Oral Instruction : Immobilize the opponent then strike

Bunkai : The Cross Block

Heian Godan



Photograph 31

Movement 8

Left Front Stance Lower Cross Block

The general belief is that the lower cross block is for blocking the front kick, but here, it is used as an invitation. (Not shown in Photograph)



Photograph 32

Movement 9

Upper Cross Block

Block the opponent's right upper punch using a cross block with the right hand on the inside and the left hand to the outside. (Photograph 32)

Bunkai 1: In Case Your Sleeve is Pulled



Photograph 40

Movement 13

Horse Stance Right Down Block

The opponent pulls on your left sleeve or hand with his left hand. (Photograph 40)



Photograph 41

Do not fight the pull. Use your left leg to support your weight, step into opponent's left hip joint with your right foot and push it back.

(Photographs 41, 42, and 43)

Throw a right hammer punch to opponent who has lost his balance. (Photographs 44 and 45)



Photograph 42



Photograph 44



Photograph 43



Photograph 45

In his book "Karate Do Daikan", published in 1938, Sensei Shinpan Shiroma, a pupil of Master Itosu, explains this movement as, "Grabbing the opponent's hand and pulling it to the left as you step onto opponent's leg with the sword edge of your right foot."

(Photograph 52)



Photograph 52

Explanation for Movements 14 - 17 (Back Sword Block - Back Fist)



Photograph 53 Movement 14



Photograph 54 Movement 15



Photograph 55 Movement 16



Photograph 56 Movement 17

Question

How do you use the back sword block? How do you use the crescent kick?

Oral Instruction : Perform a technique that is shown in the kata as two counts in one count

Bunkai 1 : Counter Crescent Kick



Photograph 57



Photograph 58



Photograph 59



Photograph 60



Photograph 61



Photograph 62

Movement 14

Horse Stance Left Back Sword Strike

Movement 15

Right Crescent Kick

Movements 15 and 16 are performed simultaneously. In reality, movement 16 comes before movement 15.

Execute a crescent kick against the opponent's right straight punch toward their armpit, pushing in with the ball of your foot.

(Photographs 57, 58, and 59)

The opponent's punch will stop. Grab their right hand with your left hand. (Photograph 60)

Movement 16

Horse Stance Right Elbow Punch

While opponent is pushed backward from the kick, step in with your right foot and execute a right elbow strike to the chest. (Photograph 61)

Movement 17

Crossed Leg Stance Right Back Fist

Draw in your back leg, and execute a back fist to the face. (Photograph 62)

Explanation For Movements 18 - 20 (Jump - Reinforced Block)



Photograph 63 Movement 18



Photograph 64 Movement 19



Photograph 65 Movement 20

Question

What does the fist raised high in movement 18 do? (Photograph 63)

What does the lower cross block in movement 19 do? (Photograph 64)

There are explanations that the jump is to avoid opponent's sweeping a weapon of some sort under your legs. This theory does not work, because the previous movement 18 with the fist held high would not allow a high jump.

Bunkai 1

Oral Instruction : There is one opponent to the front

Oral Instruction : The cross over step is preparation for a turn

Oral Instruction : The jump is a throw

Bunkai 2

Oral Instruction : The front hand is the attacking hand

Oral Instruction : There are no movements ending in a block

Bunkai 1 : Opposite Hand Back Throw



Photograph 66

Movement 18

Upper Right Back Hand Punch

After the back fist of movement 17, use the left hand to grab the opponent's right wrist and raise it upward, while facing away from opponent and taking their elbow joint backwards.

(Photograph 66)



Photograph 67

Movement 19

Jump

Cross Over Stance

Lower Cross Block

Continuously from movement 18, throw opponent over your shoulder. (We have not shown the backwards grasp on the elbow joint because of the danger) (Photographs 67, 68, 69, and 70)

Execute a lower punch after the throw.

(Photograph 71)



Photograph 68



Photograph 70



Photograph 69



Photograph 71



Photograph 76

If you are unable to correctly **grasp** opponent's elbow joint for the throw, the opponent will **totter** forward. (Photograph 75 and 76)



Photograph 77

Movement 20

Right Front Stance Reinforced Block

Step in with right foot and execute an upper punch to the chin. (Photograph 77)



Photograph 83



Photograph 84



Photograph 85



Photograph 86

Movement 22

Left Front Stance

Right Lower Sword Hand **Strike**

Grab opponent's pants in the **groin area**.

(Photographs 83 and 84)

Grabbing the muscle (or superfluous **flesh**) inside the **leg** is very effective.

Movement 23

Right Back Stance **Manji Kamae**

Raise your right hand as you throw opponent's body backwards with your left hand.

(Photographs 85 and 86)

Explanation for Movements 24 - 25 (Manji Kamae, Direction Switch)



Photograph 87 Movement 24



Photograph 88 Movement 25

Question

What does the Manji Kamae represent?

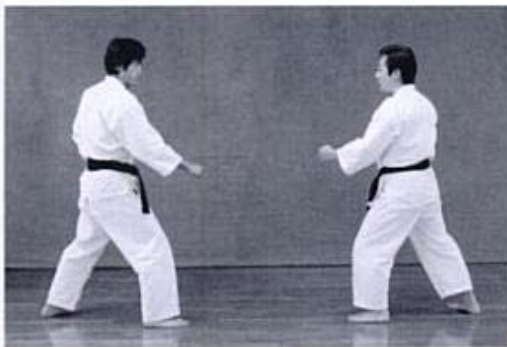
Why do you change direction?

Oral Instruction : Perform movements that are shown as two counts in kata in one count

Oral Instruction : Upper level is lower level, lower level is upper level

Bunkai 1 : Invite a Front Kick and Throw

Heian Godan



Photograph 89



Photograph 90

Movement 24

Closed Stance Manji Kamae

Use a left down block to block the opponent's left kick. (Photographs 89, 90, and 91)



Photograph 91



Photograph 92



Photograph 93



Photograph 95



Photograph 94



Photograph 96

Movement 25

Change Direction Manji Kamae

Move your body while continually moving your hand to lift the opponent's leg. (Photograph 92)

Use a right hand down block to throw the opponent backward. (Photographs 93, 94, 95, and 96)

Explanation for Movements 26 - 28 (Manji Kamae, Lower Sword Hand Strike)

Below is a shortened explanation because it has already been covered.

Movement 26 Left Back Stance, Manji Kamae

Movement 27 Right Front Stance, Left Lower Sword Hand Strike

Movement 28 Left Back Stance Manji Kamae

Finish

This is all of the bunkai for Heian Godan.

Naihanchi Shodan (Tekki Shodan)

The Explanation for Bunkai Kumite

This kata employs only the horse stance and cross leg stance and the line of movement is a straight horizontal line. It is said to be the greatest mystery in the world of karate, since its use is unclear. The techniques, which it teaches, are for ultra close in fighting and it involves moving to the side and rear of the opponent.

The kata in pictures is different than Shotokan's Tekki Shodan, but I have used the Naihanchi Shodan, which Master Funakoshi presented in his first book. The part which has been changed to Tekki, the crossed arm block, made the move larger, but the bunkai is the same.

The Main Points of Naihanchi Shodan

1. Cross Leg Stance

Joint Kick

2. Inside Block

Throw

3. Sweep Block

Foot Sweep

4. Double Hand Punch

Grab and Punch



Movement 13



Movement 14



Movement 15



Movement 16



Movement 17



Connective Movement



Movement 18



Movement 19



Movement 20



Connective Movement



Connective Movement



Movement 21



Connective Movement



Connective Movement



Movement 22



Movement 23



Movement 24



Finish (Naore)

Explanation for Movements 1 - 7 (Clasped Hands - Inside Block)



Photograph 1 Ready



Photograph 2 Cont.Movement



Photograph 3 Movement 1



Photograph 4 Movement 2



Photograph 5 Movement 3



Photograph 6 Movement 4



Photograph 7 Movement 5



Photograph 8 Cont.Movement



Photograph 9 Movement 6

Question

If the movements up to the elbow strike are against an opponent to the right, and even if the back knife hand is plausible, why is the elbow strike executed with the lower body in a horse stance facing the front? (Photograph 4) Is this kata in fact meant to be used against opponents to the left and to the right? Where is the target of the hook punch? (Photograph 7)

Oral Instruction : There is One Opponent to the Front

Oral Instruction : The Names of the Techniques have been Disguised

Oral Instruction : Kick Low while Grabbing the Opponent

Oral Instruction : The Front Hand is the Attacking Hand

Oral Instruction : Crossed Leg Stance Signifies a Body Shift or a Joint Kick

Oral Instruction : Take Opponent's Back

Oral Instruction : Execute Movements that are Performed as Two Counts in the Kata in One Count

Oral Instruction : Immobilize the Opponent before Striking



Photograph 14



Photograph 15



Photograph 16



Photograph 17

Movement 2

Horse Stance Left Elbow Strike

Cradle the opponent's head with your right hand and execute a left elbow strike to the opponent's jaw. (Photographs 14 and 15)

Movement 3

Right Side Kamae

This represents a connected movement.

Movement 4

Left Down Block

Take the opponent down by grabbing their left wrist with your left hand. (Photograph 16)

Movement 5

Right Hook Punch

Hook the right fist around the opponent's neck.

Connected Movement

Crossed Leg Stance

Execute a joint kick to the back of the left knee with the sole of the right foot. (Photograph 17)



Photograph 18



Photograph 19



Photograph 20



Photograph 21

Movement 6

Horse Stance Right Inside Block

Pull the right hand that is hooked around the opponent's neck upward, and then twist it downward and right while moving into a horse stance throwing the opponent in a twisting movement.

(Photographs 18, 19, 20, and 21)

It is easy to throw the opponent if you move at a 90-degree angle when moving from a crossed leg stance to a horse stance.

When throwing, make sure opponent lands between your legs. Hold opponent's left elbow on your left knee and bend it backwards.

(Photograph 21)

Immobilize the opponent and execute a left elbow strike to the head. (Not shown in photograph)

Bunkai 1 : Joint Kick with the Sole of Foot, Nami Gaeshi



Photograph 29



Photograph 30



Photograph 31



Photograph 32

Connected Movement

Crossed Leg Stance

The joint kick to the knee is to be used together with the inside block in movement 6.

(Photographs 29 and 30)

Movement 6

Horse Stance Right Inside Block

Against an opponent's right straight punch execute a right inside block while kicking to the hip joint with the bottom of the right foot.

(Photograph 31)

Movement 7

Horse Stance Cross Block

While grabbing with the right hand force the opponent off balance to the outside by executing a left inside block to the opponent's right elbow.

(Photograph 32)



Photograph 61



Photograph 62



Photograph 63



Photograph 64

Movement 10

Right Nami Gaeshi Left Back Fist Punch

If opponent did not fall in movement 9, grab the opponent's right elbow with your left hand, push it upward and twist it in the opposite direction of movement 9, and push them to the front while executing a nami gaeshi to the front of the knee. (Photographs 61, 62, 63)

Force the opponent off balance toward the tip of a triangle whose base is the opponent's two feet.

Movement 11

Right Side Stance

Bring back left foot and open your body, hold elbow with left hand, and break opponent's balance by pushing them forward. (Photograph 63)

Movement 12

Horse Stance Left Double Punch

Step out with left foot, pull opponent's right hand with your right hand, and punch with left hand to opponent's head. (Photograph 64)

Movements 13 - 24 are repetitions.

Bunkai by Master Funakoshi and Master Mabuni

The following photographs are introduced in the primal book of Master Funakoshi, "Rentan goshin karate." (Photograph 66)

Please compare with the above bunkai. (Photograph 65)



Photograph 65



Photograph 66

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