

Kata

Karate kata is a set of techniques organized as pre-arranged movements that simulates a fight. Okinawan kata have traditionally been used to preserve sets of techniques and fighting principles, and they have also served as the basis upon Okinawan fighting systems (such as Gōjū-ryū) are taught. In kata, each movement can be interpreted as different techniques and its applications. Kata is to be understood as a "living textbook" in which karate proper—its techniques and philosophy—is passed down. The practice of kata itself provides the practitioner a sense of structure and possibilities to use in a real fight. Bunkai, on the other hand, is the analysis—or interpretation (oyō-bunkai)—of kata movements. After the analysis of bunkai, karateka usually practice two or more person drills to ingrain the application in the muscle memory, which makes sense of sequences of movements in kata forms. Techniques-within-techniques are revealed through constant practice of kata and bunkai. The kata taught in Gōjū-ryū are rather traditional and in most organizations are emphasized more than actual kumite (or free sparring). This emphasis in kata is also an emphasis in bunkai, the actual self-defense application of the kata movements. The self-defense approach explains why Gōjū-ryū does not emphasize free sparring and its limiting rules. Kata detractors say that these kata are useless in a real fighting situation, while proponents say they are failing to realize what the purpose of kata and bunkai is. This conflict of views is due to the sport emphasis of gendai budo and the fighting emphasis of koryū bujutsu. As gendai budo, the practice of karate kata is focused in performance and channeled through performative sport-oriented tournaments. This way of practicing kata ultimately makes it useless for self defense. On the other hand, as bujutsu, the practice of kata is focused not only on performance but also in the fighting knowledge codified in it. So the term "kata practice" has two totally different meanings: as gendai budo it is performance; as bujutsu, it is performance and self defense application. [Kihongata Kihongata means a "kata of basics." In Goju Ryu, sanchin kata is the foundation to all other Gōjū kata because it teaches basic movements, basic techniques, power generation and breathing techniques from qigong. It is also the foundation of body conditioning. The more the karateka practices this kata, the more his Heishugata will change. First variation of Sanchin-kata (sanchingata dai-ichi) serves as Kihongata. See more on Sanchin kata below. Heishugata Heishugata means "kata with closed hands" or "fundamental kata". This kata teaches fundamentals (i.e. not only basics of movement but also principles) of the style while basics are learned during Kihongata. Traditionally, Kaishugata was taught as a second kata, or a "specialty kata" of a student, after Heishugata (e.g. Sanchin-kata and/or Tensho-kata) is learned and practiced. Sanchin kata - Kanji: 三戦 - Katakana: ミヨウ (three battles): In Gōjū, there are two sanchin kata: Miyagi's sanchin (or "sanchin dai ichi"): The most widely taught as initial and Kihongata, was created for such purpose by Chojun Miyagi, and has no turns so the karateka goes forward and then backwards. Higashionna's sanchin (or "sanchin dai ni"): It is a full-version Sanchingata and is older and was taught by Higashionna Kanryo. In this kata the karateka always goes forward, but turns 180 degrees twice. Tensho kata - Kanji: 転手 - Katakana: テンショ (): Tensho was created in 1921 as "softer sanchin" by Chojun Miyagi to balance Go aspect of Heishugata (Sanchin-kata) with Ju variation for Heishugata. Tensho means "revolving hands." It is a combination of hard dynamic tension with deep breathing and soft flowing hand movements. Kaishugata Kaishugata means a "kata with open hands." This is a more advanced from Heishugata type. Kaishugata serves as a "combat application reference" kata and is open to vast interpretation (Bunkai) of its movements purpose (hence, "open hands"). Saifa - Kanji: 四手 - Katagana: ムシヅ (to destroy and defeat): This is usually the first advanced Gōjū-ryū kata the student learn in most goju kaiha, after gekisai dai ichi and gekisai dai ni. The first three moves are the signature of the kata—a wrist-grab-throw technique. The center of the kata is the sagi ashi dachi, or crane stance, which is simultaneous to two blocks and a knee strike followed by a mae geri. Seiunchin - Kanji: 六手 - Katagana: ヨロイ (Attack, Conquer, suppress; also referred to as "to control and pull into battle"): Seiunchin kata demonstrates the use of techniques to unbalance, throw and grapple, contains close-quartered striking, sweeps, take-downs and throws. Shisochin - Kanji: 四向 - Katagana: シヨウ ("to destroy in four directions" or "fight in four directions"): It integrates powerful linear attacks (shotei zuki) and circular movements and blocks. It was the favorite kata of the later Miyagi. Sanseiru - Kanji: 三十六手 - Katagana: サンジュウロク (36 Hands): The kata teaches how to move around the opponent in close quarters fights, and emphasizes the destruction of the opponent's mobility by means of kanzetsu geri. Sepai - Kanji: 十八手 - Katagana: セパイ (18 Hands): Sepai kata incorporates both the four directional movements and 45° angular attacks and implements techniques for both long distance and close quarter combat. This was a Seikichi Toguchi's specialty kata. Kururunfa - Kanji: 四 - Katagana: コウ (holding on long and striking suddenly): its techniques are based on Chinese Praying Mantis style. It was Ei'ichi Miyazato's specialty kata. Seisan - Kanji: 十三手 - Katagana: セイサン (13 Hands): Seisan is thought to be one of the oldest kata quite spread among other Naha-te schools. Other ryūha also practice this kata or other versions of it. Suparenpei - Kanji: 百八手 - Katagana: セパンペイ (108 Hands): Also known as Pechurin, it is the most advanced Gōjū-ryū kata. Initially it had three levels to master (Go, Chu, and Jo), later Miyagi left only one, the highest, "Jo" level. This was a Meitoku Yagi's and Morio Higaonna's specialty kata. Fukuyugata In 1940, Gen Hayakawa, governor of Okinawa, assembled the Karate-Do Special Committee, composed by Ishihara Shochoku (chairman), Miyagi Chojun, Kamiya Jinsei, Shinzato Jinan, Miyasato Koji, Tokuda Anbun, Kinjo Kensei, Kyan Shinei, and Nagamine Shoshin. The goal of these men was to create a series of Okinawan kata in order to teach both physical education and very basic Okinawan independent style martial arts to school children. Their goal was not to create a standardized karate as the Japanese had been doing with Kendo and Judo for the sake of popularization. This type of kata is not traditional Gōjū-ryū kata; instead, they are "promotional kata", simple enough to be taught as part of Physical Education programs at schools, and part of a standardized karate syllabus for schools, independently of the sensei's style. Nagamine Shoshin (Matsubayashi Shorin-Ryū) developed fukyugata dai ichi, which is part of current Matsubayashi Shorin Ryū syllabus; and Miyagi Chojun developed fukyugata dai ni, which is part of current Goju Ryu syllabus under the name gekisai dai ichi. Some Goju Ryu dojo still practice fukyugata dai ichi. Miyagi sensei also created gekisai dai ni, but it is practiced by Goju Ryu and some offsprings only. Gekisai dai ichi - kanji: 一撃 - Hiragana: RMUD ("to destroy" or "attack and

destroy"). It was developed by Miyagi Chojun after 1936, and it is the first Goju kata to be taught to beginners. It is called fukyugata dai ni by Matsubayashi Shorin Ryu practitioners. Gekisai dai ni - Miyagi created also Gekisai-dai-ni. Gekisai Dai Ni incorporates slightly "softer" techniques, although it follows a similar pattern to that of Gekisai Dai Ichi. It involves the use of open-handed and circular techniques, and it is the second kata to be taught to beginners. Gekisai dai san -Gekisai Dai Shi-