



Kata: Form

Gekisai Dai Ichi	Defend and Destroy #1
Gekisai Dai Ni	Defend and Destroy #2
Sanchin	Three Battles
Saifa	To Smash and Tear to Pieces
Seiyunchen	To Control by Pulling Inwards
Shisochin	To Subdue the Four Sides
Sanseiru	Thirty-Six (Hands/Strategies)
Seipai	Eighteen (Hands/Strategies)
Tensho	Rotating Palms
Kururunfa	To Remain Still and then (Suddenly) Break and Destroy
Seisan	Thirteen (Hands/Strategies)
Suparinpei	One Hundred and Eight (Hands/Strategies)

Three Pillars of

Karate:

Kihon
Kata
Kumite

Belt Color Sequence

White
Purple
Yellow
Orange
Blue
1st Green
2nd Green
3rd Green
Brown
Black

About Kata

by Morio Higaonna

A kata is a pattern of movements which contains a series of logical and practical attacking and blocking techniques. In each kata there are certain set or predetermined movements which the student can practice alone, without a partner. These kata have been created by previous masters after many years of research, training, and actual combat experience.

The applications of the techniques in these kata have evolved from and have been tested in actual combat. In this way, each kata has been improved and refined, and has evolved into the kata we practice today. Because of the time and the kata's complex evolution it is impossible to trace the exact development that the kata underwent, but it is known that the old masters studied the combative techniques and movements in fighting between animal and animal, animal and man, and man-to-man. They also studied the physiology of the human body and its relationship to combat, taking into account such factors as the circulation of the blood in a twenty-four hour day, the vulnerability of the vital points in relation to the time of day, and other cyclic laws of nature such as the rising and setting of the sun, and the rise and fall of the tides. All of these elements are incorporated into the kata.

The purpose for developing kata also varied with the times and with the people who developed them. For example, in China, over 1600 years ago, kata was developed and practiced for the purpose of self-defense, whereas the Buddhist monks would practice kata for the purpose of strengthening the spirit as well as the body.

The true meaning and spirit of karate are imbedded in the kata and only by the practice of kata can we come to understand them. For this reason, if we change or simplify the kata either to accommodate the beginner or for tournament purposes, then we also will have lost the true meaning and spirit of karate.

Green Belt, 2 Stripes = Gokyu (5th Kyu)

Kyu = Ranks below Black Belt.

In karate there is no first attack. Every kata begins with a defensive movement, which exemplifies this spirit. Not only is there no first attack, but the best defense is to avoid the fight altogether. That is why it is said that karate is the art of a wise man.

To practice kata correctly, every movement must be repeated over and over again. Only through constant repetition can the techniques become reflex action. Fortunately to that end, an important aspect of kata is that it can be practiced alone, anytime and anywhere. When kata is performed by a well-trained person, its dynamic power and beauty of movement become almost aesthetic in quality.

Almost all of the Goju Ryu kata were handed down from Higaonna Kanryo Sensei. Higaonna Sensei had studied and trained for many years under Ryu Ryuku Sensei in Fukien Province, China. The following kata were handed down by Higaonna Sensei from Ryu Ryuku Sensei: *Sanchin*, *Saifa*, *Seiyunchin*, *Shisochin*, *Sanseiru*, *Sepai*, *Kururunfa*, *Sesan*, and *Suparinpei*. The original creators of these kata are unknown.

Many of the kata names are Chinese numbers symbolizing Buddhist concepts. For example, *Suparinpei* (the number 108 in Chinese) has a special significance in Buddhism. It is believed that man has 108 evil passions, and so in Buddhist temples on December 31st, at the stroke of midnight, a bell is rung 108 times to drive away those spirits. The number 108 in *Suparinpei* is calculated from 36×3 . The symbolism of the number 36 is given in the explanation of *Sanseiru* which follows. The number 3 symbolizes the past, present and future.

Sanseiru, written in Chinese characters, is the number 36. Symbolically it is calculated from the formula 6×6 . The first six represents eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and spirit. The second six symbolizes colour, voice, taste, smell, touch, and justice.

Sepai, similarly, is the number 18. It is calculated from 6×3 . The six here is the second six of *Sanseiru*. The three represents good, bad, and peace.

The four kata, *Gekisai Dai Ichi*, *Gekisai Dai Ni*, revised *Sanchin*, and *Tensho* are relatively new, having been created by Miyagi Chojun Sensei. *Gekisai Dai Ichi* and *Dai Ni* were developed by Miyagi Sensei in order to popularize karate among young people. These two kata, performed with exaggerated movements, are relatively easy to understand.

Miyagi Chojun Sensei's *Sanchin* preserves the essence of Higaonna Kanryo Sensei's *Sanchin*, of which it is a variation. Miyagi Sensei developed it particularly to balance the former one. Its performance requires a different use of the muscles, leading it to a more symmetrical development. This is important for optimum use of the body, and especially in the prevention of injury to the back and other areas.

Whereas *Sanchin* kata can be considered an aspect of the *go* (hard) of Goju, *Tensho* kata represents the *ju* (soft). One of the purposes of *Tensho* kata is concentration on shifting focus points while performing the soft hand movements. Moreover, within these soft hand movements tremendous power is generated.