

KATA FORMS OF KARATE

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This article summarizes the kata or formal exercises of modern-day karate schools and includes the history behind the kata and its historic link through styles and teachers. It is organized as a reference for the karate teacher and provides a background for understanding the various katas of other styles and the origins of many of the traditional kata. Multiple sources of documentation have been compiled into this summary and are referenced throughout.

1. Overview

Kata is the formal exercise and primary training tool of karate. Kata consists of a prearranged series of movements designed to provide the student with a tool for practicing the basic karate techniques and combinations of techniques through repetition.

Since most karate schools use kata in their training, it provides a common ground between styles and systems. Though most common usage of kata focuses on solo or one-person forms, two-person and three-person kata also exist within certain styles and systems.

All karate styles and schools are founded on the use of basic martial arts techniques. These techniques include punches, strikes, blocks, kicks, and other movements depending on the school and style. These basic techniques are the "alphabet" of karate-do. Most schools teach the basic techniques and include repetitive practice of them on a regular basis.

Early karate teachers linked these basic techniques into prearranged series (kata) to support many teaching objectives including development of combinations, simulation of combat against multiple imaginary opponents and/or another venue for practice of a particular technique or series of techniques. Many feel that the kata are reenactments of former battles.¹ Regardless of intent, these series of movements became the dictionary of karate. The early kata forms have been identified with many past karate teachers and schools and are the kata many modern-day schools throughout the world include as part of their curriculum today.

It is thought that most karate kata originated in Okinawa, when in fact, many of the early kata were named after Chinese kung-fu experts who taught the Okinawan's their art.² This historic linkage or "handholding" of kata development to China is strong.

Many of the forms used today appear to have origins in China and then were formalized in Okinawa between 1600 and 1950. One can speculate that Chinese martial artists traveled

to Okinawa and continued to do their daily practice of their art. The Okinawan's watched these forms and tried to copy them. After many years of development, they were organized and formally handed down from teacher to student, in many cases, father to son.

At the time when karate kata was being developed in Okinawa, kata was the primary means of instruction. Knowledge of the martial arts was transmitted from generation to generation, and training was done in secrecy. No written records were kept, and kata were taught selectively to a chosen few. The security of the village was dependent upon the men of the village and their ability to defend it against attack. Therefore, the karate and its kata were closely held and became unique to the region where it was taught. It is important to understand that a single kata was practiced for years, and a particular teacher may have only been proficient in a few kata. Many of the great masters traveled from teacher to teacher to learn several of the kata.

Prior to the 1700's, little formalization of kata existed and even the concept of a karate dojo was unknown. Many of these forms were finally organized between 1750 and 1900 through teachers such as Karate Sakugawa (1733-1851) and Soken (Bushi) Matsumura (1797-1889). Though a large number of kata were directly brought from China, some were created by the Okinawan masters themselves. Modern karate kata can be traced back to three primary Okinawan schools: Shuri-Te, Tomari-Te, and Naha-Te. These schools are classified as such because of the village from which the schools or styles originated: Shuri, Tomari and Naha. All of these villages are located on the southern tip of Okinawa. The later section on kata history will trace the three Okinawan schools, their masters and their traditional katas.

Around 1900, karate and these Okinawan kata migrated to Japan. Largely due to Gichin Funakoshi (1868-1957), many of the basic katas from Okinawa were taught in Japan, initially at the collegiate level. These kata were modified for better acceptance by the Japanese and saw widespread growth in Japan during the 1940's. Funakoshi presented the Japanese with a karate with a formalism not usually seen in early Okinawan dojos. The Japanese embraced this karate and soon other teachers from Okinawa, such as Kenwa Mabuni ((1889-1953), came and taught in Japan. Mabuni was a student of Yasutsune Itosu (1830-1915) and Hagashiona, and a friend of Funakoshi. Mabuni developed his Shito-Ryu style based on many katas from both systems and taught these to the Japanese.³ At the end of World War II, United States military personnel began learning these karate styles during their occupation of Japan. Many soldiers carried what they learned back to the United States and the spread of practitioners grew in the United States and now covers the globe. Many kata are common to both Okinawan and Japanese styles and the descendants of those styles. A table on the following page, lists alphabetically many of the common karate in use today, listed by both their Okinawan and Japanese names. Included in the

table are interpretations of the kata's meaning. In many cases, the forms have been named after their originator.

Listing of Common Karate Kata

Okinawan	Japanese	Meaning of Title
Chinte	Chinte	Mysterious of Bamboo Hand/Calmness
Chinto	Gankaku	Fighting to the East or orig. (Chinto)/Crane on Rock (Gankaku)
Jiin	Jiin	Temple Ground
Jion	Jion	Temple Sound
Jitte	Jitte	Ten Hands
Kusanku Dai	Kanku Dai	View the Sky - Long/orig. Kusanju
Kusanku Sho	Kanku Sho	View the Sky - Short/orig. Kusanku
Naihanchi Shodan	Tekki Shodan	Fighting Holding Your Ground 1/Horse Riding (Tekki)
Naihanchi Nidan	Tekki Nidan	Fighting Holding Your Ground 2/Horse Riding (Tekki)
Naihanchi Sandan	Tekki Sandan	Fighting Holding Your Ground 3/Horse
Niseshi	Nijushiho	24 or Twenty Four Steps
Passai Sho	Bassai Dai	Penetrating Fortress - Long
Passai Dai	Bassai Sho	Penetrating Fortress - Short
Pinan Godan	Heian Godan	Peaceful Mind 5
Pinan Nidan	Heian Shodan	Peaceful Mind 2
Pinan Shodan	Heian Nidan	Peaceful Mind 1
Pinan Sandan	Heian Sandan	Peaceful Mind 3
Pinan Yondan	Heian Yondan	Peaceful Mind 4
Rohai	Meikyo	White Heron or Vision of Crane (Rohai)/Polishing Mirror (Meikyo)
Seisan (Seishan)	Hangetsu	13 or wo/Half Moon (Hangetsu)
Sochin	Sochin	To Move Into Battle or Preserve Peace
Unshu	Unsu	Cloud Hand
Useshi, Gojushiho	Gojushiho	54 Steps Black Tiger and use of White
Wankan	Matsukaze	Kings Crown (Wankan) / Pine Tree Wind (Matsukaze)
Wansu (Wanshu)	Empi	Flying Swallow (Empi) or orig. Chinese

2. History

Kata, as with martial arts in general, has a lineage from China. It doesn't really matter whether the transfer of knowledge was through Okinawan martial artists traveling to China and studying kung-fu or by Chinese masters visiting Okinawa. There is strong evidence that

many of the kata were in existence in China prior to the 1600's. One of the few written accounts of kata brought from China is the text of Bubishi.³ The book, Bubishi, meaning "Martial Art Spirit", recorded the Fukien style of kempo. Several of the Okinawan kata are discussed in Bubishi including Gojushiho and hakutsura (white crane form). The Bubishi may have been introduced to Okinawa through any one of many theories and supported the development of early kata.

Kata development in Okinawa included those kata taken from the Chinese and those developed by Okinawan masters themselves. Since no written records were kept, kata served as a perfect way for transferring the knowledge from generation to generation. This is much the same way ancient people used rhymes to remember things. In most cases, the teaching would be based on a family tradition of martial arts skills and be taught by the head of the family or village elder. This was a form of "village karate" as opposed to "dojo karate" as we know it today.

Around the mid-1700's, three key individuals seemed to form a melting pot for the birth of modern karate kata: Shinjo Choken, Karate Sakugawa (1733-1815), and Chatan Yara (c. 1750). Choken was one of the earliest practitioners of Shuri-Te. Both Sakugawa and Yara traveled to Fukien Province in China and probably studied martial arts and weaponry while there. Both studied under the Chinese envoy, Kusanku, either in China or while Kusanku was in Okinawa. Kusanku was reported to be an expert in the martial arts and had learned his abilities from a Shaolin monk. From this combination of individuals in the mid-1700's, karate kata began to focus.

The original Okinawan karate forms were developed during the 19th century under two major divisions of styles: Shuri-Te (Shuri Hands) and Naha-Te (Naha Hands). Though they were both derived from similar Chinese forms, each developed differently based on location and social position of the developers. The Shuri-Te was practiced in and around the city of Shuri where the king and members of the nobility lived. Naha-Te was practiced in and around the coastal city of Naha which was a large trade center. Another style developed which is closely related to Shuri-Te, which was named Tomari-Te. Tomari-Te was practiced in the Tomari village populated by farmers and fisherman. The three styles have differences which can be traced back to the social-economic position of the practitioners. At the bottom, was the worker class studying Tomari-Te. The middle level was merchant class students studying Naha-Te. The upper-class noblemen were then studying Shuri-Te in and around the capital.

3. Shuri-Te

The beginnings of the Shuri-Te style and its kata center around Karate Sakugawa (1733-1815). Sakugawa was born and lived near Akata Cho in the southern section of the city of Shuri, Okinawa. He received some of his early martial arts instruction from Takahara Peichan, a map maker by trade but also skilled in martial arts. Sakugawa then became a student of Kusanku, the Chinese envoy. He spent much of his time traveling and studying in parts of China and southern Okinawa. Sakugawa is attributed to combining the Chinese kempo with native Okinawan techniques called "te" to form Okinawan karate. The karate and kata became more formalized during this period and Sakugawa is credited with formulating the dojo precepts of character, sincerity, effort, etiquette and self-control. His most famous student was Bushi Matsumura (1797-1889). Sakugawa passed on the Kusanku kata and the a bo kata.

The kata development of Shuri-Te traced similar lines as to its teachers. The primary student of Sakugawa was Bushi Matsumura and he carried on the Kusanku kata, while also adding to it the Naihanchi, Passai, Seisan, Chinto, Channan, Gojushiho and Hakutsura kata. This marked the most significant changes to the Shuri-Te system and its kata.

Soken (Bushi) Matsumura grew up in Yamagawa village of the city of Shuri, Okinawa. He was of the warrior class and spent over four years studying martial arts under Karate Sakugawa. He was recruited into the service of the Royal Okinawan Sho family and became the chief martial arts trainer for the king and eventually became the head bodyguard to the Okinawan King. During this period, he spent time in China and received additional training in the Chinese martial arts. In recognition for his abilities and accomplishments, the Okinawan King gave him the title of Bushi, meaning "warrior." Bushi Matsumura created the Shorin-Ryu style of karate. This later gave birth to Shotokan Ryu, Kobayashi Ryu and Shito Ryu styles.

The following table lists the kata practiced by each of these primary Shuri-Te styles. The kata development started with a few kata and slowly grew over the years to include many more. Each new style which grew from the Shuri-Te included its own versions of many of the common kata. One of the most stylized of kata is Kusanku which has versions in Matsumura Seito Ryu, Kobayashi Ryu, Shotokan Ryu, Shito Ryu, Matsubayashi Ryu, Isshin Ryu, and Shobayashi Ryu systems.

Kata From Shuri-Te Styles

SHURI-TE	SHOTOKAN	SHORIN-RYU	KOBAYASI	SHITO-RYU
Ananko	Chinte	Ananku (brought from Taiwan – Kyan)	Chinto	Chinte
Aoyagi	Chinto	Chinto	Kusanku-Da	Chinto
Chinte	Jiin	Fukyugata-Ichi. (made by Nagamine)	Kusanku-Sho	Gojushiho
Chinto	Jion	Fukyugata-Ni (altered by Gekisai-Ichi)	Naifanchi-Nidan	Jiin
Jiin	Jitte	Gojushiho	Naifanchi-Sandan	Jitte
Jion	Kusanku-Dai	Kusanku-Dai (Chatanyara-no-Kusanku)	Naifanchi-Shodan	Jion
Jitte	Kusanku-Sho	Naifanchi- Nidan	Passai-Dai	Kusanku-Dai
Jyuroko	Naifanchi-Nidan	Naifanchi- Sandan	Passai-Sho	Kusanku-Sho
Kusanku-Dai	Naifanchi-Sandan	Naifanchi- Shodan	Pinan-Godan	Naifanchi-Nidan
Kusanku-Sho	Naifanchi-Shodan	Passai-Dai (Tomari-no-Passai)	Pinan-Nidan	Naifanchi-Sandan
Naifanchi-Nidan	Niseshi	Pinan-Godan	Pinan-Sandan	Naifanchi-Shodan
Naifanchi-Sandan	Passai-Dai	Pinan-Nidan	Pinan-Shodan	Niseshi
Naifanchi-Shodan	Passai-Sho	Pinan-Sandan	Pinan-Yondan	Passai-Dai
Passai-Dai	Pinan-Godan	Pinan-Shodan		Passai-Sho
Passai-Sho	Pinan-Nidan	Pinan-Yondan		
Pinan-Godan	Pinan-Sandan	Rohai		
Pinan-Nidan	Pinan-Shodan	Wankan		
Pinan-Sandan	Pinan-Yondan	Wansu		
Pinan-Shodan	Rohai			
Pinan-Yondan	Sesan			Rohai
Sesan	Sochin			Sesan
Usechi (Gojoushiho)	Unsu			Sochin
	Useshi			Unsu
	Wankan			Wankan
	Wansu			Wansu

4. Tomari-Te

Tomari-Te was developed out of the Shuri-Te style of karate and was indicative of the karate practiced in and around the Tomari village near Shuri. The differences between the two styles are slight. There were several Chinese visitors to the Tomari region that did not reach Shuri. These teachings did not originally influence Shuri-Te but later an exchange in ideas and katas did take place. Many kata became part of both styles. There were several kata, however, that are unique to Tomari-Te. These were Wansu, Rohai, and Wankan. In addition, though the exact origin of Ananku is unknown, it is believed that Chotoku Kyan (1870-1945) brought back this form from Taiwan in the year 1895. There are others that are said to have existed but have been lost.

The Tomari-Te style was started through the efforts of Karate Sakugawa (1733-1815). The initial kata used was a version of Kusanku. The teachings of the style were carried on through Makabe Chokin (c. 1785). Influences from South China (Chinto) and students of Chokin expanded the forms used by the Tomari-Te school. The unique kata Wansu, Rohai and Wankan appear to have existed solely in the Tomari-Te system until the 1870's. Yasutsune Itosu (1830-1915) is said to have developed the Shodan, Nidan, and Sandan versions of the Rohai kata. One of the later day teachers of the Tomari-Te style is Shoshin Nagamine (b. 1907). His Matsubayashi Ryu style encompasses many of the Tomari-Te versions of Shuri-Te kata, as well as, the unique Tomari-Te kata including: Pinans, Wankan, Ananku, Gojushiho, Rohai, Wanshu, Passai, Naihanchi, Kusanku and Chinto.

5. Naha-Te

The Naha-Te style was from the Naha region of Okinawa. Two distinct styles came out of the Naha-Te: Goju-Ryu and Uechi-Ryu. The Goju-Ryu style emphasizes deep breathing. Kata, such as Sanchin, use dynamic tension or isometric muscular contraction for power training. The Uechi-Ryu style use several kata Kanei Uechi (1877-1948) learned in China and several of the kata used by the Goju-Ryu style. As an example, the Uechi-Ryu version of Sanchin is performed with open hands and does not use the deep breathing emphasized by the Goju-Ryu style.

The lineage of the Naha-Te style to China can be seen through the Crane Chinese Boxing styles and their kata. Dragon Boxing uses Seisan, Peichurrin (Suparenpei), Saam Chien and a kata mentioned in Bubishi called Eighteen Scholar Fists. Tiger Boxing also uses Saam Chien, Sanseiru, and Peichurrin, among others. Dog Boxing also uses Saam Chien and Sanseiru among others. Arhat Boxing, also known as Monk Fist, uses Saam Chien, Seisan, Jutte, Seipai, Ueseishi (Gojushiho), and Peichurrin among others. Lion Boxing uses Saam

Chien and Seisan among others. These kata can be seen in various versions in the Naha-Te and Ryuei-Ryu styles.

The following table lists some of the kata used by these two major Naha-Te styles.

Kata From Naha-Te Styles of Karate

GOJU-RYU	UECHI-RYU
Gekisai-Ichi	Sanchin
Gekisai-Ni	Sanseryu
Sanchin	Sesan
Tensho	Kanchin (made by Kanei Uechi)
Saifa	Kanshiwa (made by Kanei Uechi)
Seinchin	Seryu (made by Kanei Uechi)
Shissochin	Kanshu (made by Saburo Uehara)
Sesan	Sechin (made by Deiki Uehara)
Sanseru	
Sepai	
Kururunfa	
Suparenpe	

6. Other

There were several other styles which do not use these orthodox katas of the Shuri-Te, Tomari-Te, and Naha-Te. Some examples include the Motobu-Ryu, which was developed by that family located in Shuri; Ryuei-Ryu, which was established by the Nakaima family of Naha; Kojo-Ryu, which was developed by an old family in Naha; and Kojosho Kempo, which was established based on the system developed by the Huo family of Foochow. These styles all use unique kata directly imported from China. Although some were heavily modified, some retained the flowing, sometimes graceful movements more indicative of Chinese forms. The following table lists some of the kata used by these first two styles.

Kata From Motobu-Ryu and Ryuei-Ryu

MOTOBU-RYU	RYUEI-RYU
Motode	Sanchin-Sesan
Te	Niseshi
Torite	Sanseru
Toritekaeshi	Seyunchin
Uragaeshi	Ohan
Gassente	Pachu
Ogamite	Ananko
Kaeshide	Paiku

Karamite	Heiku
Mukite	Paipo
Nagete	
Ajikatanomainote	

Kojosho, though not a classical Okinawan style, shares similar Chinese roots with Kojo-Ryu. Both styles share developmental paths through the Fukien region of China and influences from Isei Kojo. The following table lists some of the primary kata used by these two styles and the kamae (posture) or subsets of these forms. These subsets help facilitate teaching basic theories of the style. Either the primary or subsets can be referred to as separate kata.

Kata and Kamae from Kojo-Ryu and Kojosho Kempo

KOJO-RYU		KOJOSHO KEMPO		
Kamae:	Kata (Futari):	Kamae:	Kata (Hitori):	
Hakutsuru ken	Seishin	Kotora	Tora	Hakutsura
Hako ken	Fudo	Kotsuru	Tsuru	Hako (Byakko)
Hakuryu ken	Jinpu	Kyu Sengutsu	Hebi	Hakuryu
Tenkan ken	Jumonji	Kakure Yoso	Taka	Ten No Kata
Chikan ken	Unryu	Cho yo no Kata	Ryu	Ku No Kata
Kukan ken	Aiki	Cho in no Kate	Shika	Chi No Kata
	Katate Segan	Nami Asobi Hyo	Hyo	
	Seicha	Yama Idaki Saru	Saru	
	Techi	Miehi Satori Kuma	Kuma	
	Suika		Kokaku	
	Chiseigan		Jayo	
	Ichimonji		Ryuroku	

7. Solo Kata

Solo kata can be divided into two broad categories. One group are those that are focused on physical development. The other group consists of kata which develop fast reflexes and the ability to move quickly. All kata require and foster rhythm and coordination.³

Kata should be performed with intensity and focus, but also with humility. There is a theme associated with each kata that the karateka wishes to exhibit to the viewers. This should be done with exactness, power and speed and always done with good basic techniques. The performance of the kata should not be arrogant and must always display the courtesy required of a karateka. One expression of this courtesy is the bow at the beginning and end

of every kata. The stance is an informal attention or ready stance. After the bow, one moves into the opening of the kata, relaxed, but eyes forward and the body ready to respond to any attack. The kata is then performed, usually starting with a block and performed along a line or series of lines. An example of this is Pinan Shodan (Heian Shodan), in which the performance is done along a series of lines which trace out a capital "I" on the ground. The form is started at the lower intersection of the vertical and horizontal lines and, as with all forms, ends in the same position that it starts. A good check of a well done kata is to note the beginning position and ending position of the practitioner, it should be the same. Kata should always include good basic techniques and strong focus on celebration points and places where the kiai is done.

The following are descriptions of many of the kata in alphabetical order, using the Okinawan names and the Japanese name in parenthesis. The descriptions include history of the kata and brief highlights of the form's movements.

Ananku

The exact origin of Ananku is unknown, but it is believed that Chotoku Kyan (1870-1945) brought back this form to the Tomari region from Taiwan in the year 1895. Ananku means peace or safety from the south. The kata was developed as part of the Tomari-Te system and during the 1900's, was further passed on by Shoshin Nagamine (born 1907) and the Matsubayashi Ryu style.

The kata emphasizes both offensive and defensive moves from a deep forward leaning stance (front leg bent). Strong punches and double punches occur throughout the form.

Chinte

Chinte means mysterious or bamboo hand and also calmness or quelling. The name is thought by some to be derived from its unique hand techniques. Chinte is a unique Shuri-Te kata that Itosu passed on from Bushi Matsumura. It is thought that the kata was used for training against spear (yari) attacks.⁴ It has been suggested that the guards at the Shuri castle strapped bamboo staves to their forearms as a defensive measure. This strategy is embodied in the original form of the kata.

The form begins in tranquility, becomes powerful and ends in calmness. One rare technique in this form is the two-finger spear hand to the opponents' eyes. This is a very good defense for those lacking strong muscular development.

Chinto

(Gankaku) The Chinto kata was created by Bushi Matsumura (1797-1884) and was based on the techniques he learned from a Chinese sailor named Chinto who became

shipwrecked on the Ryuku Islands. After drifting ashore, Chinto taught the inhabitants of the Tomari village including, Matsumura, Kosunku, and Oyadomari. Though the exact meaning of chinto is uncertain, one translation of the name means, "fighting to the east" while another is "fighting in a city". The form was probably named after its originator.

Matsumura studied with the famous Karate Sakugawa who spent significant time studying martial arts in China. It was Sakugawa that brought many kata to Okinawa and initiated many kata such as Kusanku. He is also credited with introducing the dojo concept. Matsumura is credited with integrating the Chinese Chuan Fa with the Okinawan Te creating Tode (1750) which evolved into Shuri-Te (1830) which evolved into Shorin-Ryu (1870). Gichin Funakoshi (1868-1957) took Chinto with 15 other forms to Japan.

The Chinto form was most likely introduced through Tomari but was adopted into the Shuri-Te system. There are over five versions of Chinto. The Tomari-Te version has a Chinese flair to it as opposed to the Shuri-Te version, which is more simplistic.

The Chinto form follows a straight line of movement and should be executed with powerful techniques. Characteristic of this form is the one-legged stance occurring repeatedly, which resembles the splendid sight of a crane poised on a rock and about to strike down upon its victim. It also uses various flying kicks which distinguishes it from other katas.

Jiin

The Jiin kata along with Jitte (Jutte) and Jion are classified as Shuri-Te kata though historically they may have originated with the Tomari-Te system and Matsumura. One technique common to all three of these kata is the palm heel for blocking. All three of these kata were perpetuated by the Shuri-Te system, primarily by Itosu. The Jiin kata is translated to "temple ground".

Jitte (Jutte)

The kata Jitte means "ten hands" and implies that one who has mastered it has the effectiveness of ten men. From this kata many defenses against weapon attacks, particularly stick attacks, can be learned. To block strongly, various important points found in earlier kata, such as Pinan Sandan, must be learned.

The Jitte (Jutte) kata along with Jiin and Jion are classified as Shuri-Te kata though historically they may have originated with the Tomari-Te system and Matsumura.

Jion

The Jion kata means "temple sound" and the Jion character has appeared frequently in Chinese literature since ancient times. The Jion-ji is a famous Buddhist temple and there is

also a well-known Buddhist saint named Jion. The name suggests that the kata was introduced by someone from the Jion Temple.

The Jion kata along with Jiin and Jitte (Jutte) are classified as Shuri-Te kata though historically they may have originated with the Tomari-Te system and Matsumura.

Kusanku (Kwanku)

The word Kwanku is the Okinawan pronunciation of the Chinese word Kusanku, which was named after a Chinese diplomat. Kwanku also translates to "view or look at the sky" which describes the first movement of the kata. According to Gishin Funakoshi, he renamed the kata to Kwanku for just that reason.⁵ The Kusanku kata was brought to Okinawa by a Chinese martial artist, either named or titled Ku Shanku, around 1756-1761. His Okinawan Student Karate Sakugawa (1733-1815) developed this form from Kusanku's teachings. Later, kateka's modified it from its original form, and ended up with two katas, Kusanku-Sho and Kusanku-Dai. Gishin Funakoshi used the Kusanku katas to create a single kata called Kanku and taught that version in Japan.

Around 1906, Anko Itosu quite possibly used the Kusanku forms along with a forgotten kata called Channan, to create the Pinan forms. Many movements from the Pinan forms can be seen in Kusanku.

Naihanchi (Tekki)

The origin of the Naihanchi series is unknown. Naihanchi is translated to mean "fighting holding your ground". The popularity of this form is exemplified by its use among various Okinawan and Japanese styles. It is believed that the Naihanchi forms were in use before the Pinans and were used to develop the lower body (hips and legs) strength.

The distinctive feature of this form is the posture. The horse (straddle) stance is kept low and wide, placing the weight of the body on the hips and legs. The idea is to draw all of one's strength up from the abdomen; drawing power to the center. It is this horse-riding stance that was used to derive its Japanese name, Tekki, meaning "horse-riding".

Passai (Bassai)

Passai means to "thrust asunder" or "penetrate the fortress". The original composer of Passai is unknown though legend has it that Bushi Matsumura (1797-1889) brought the original form (Dai) from China. The form is from the Shuri-Te lineage though Passai also continues to be cherished by karateka around the Tomari village. Knife-hand techniques and speedy movements distinguish this kata from the others. This form contains repeated switching of the blocking arms, motions that represent the feeling of shifting from a

disadvantageous position to an advantageous one, a feeling implying a will similar to that needed to break through an enemy's fortress.

The shorter (Sho) version of Passai was developed by Yasutsune Itosu (1830-1915). This version stresses the use of the hips in generating power and changing positions quickly. It teaches how to protect oneself by shifting so as not to expose the vital areas. Other techniques contained in this kata are used for night fighting and defense against the bo (wooden staff). The defense against the bo is performed with the open palm and, as often for this purpose, require strength. Passai Sho should be practiced after mastering Passai Dai. The two kata form a series differing in the point that Passai Dai outwardly shows power and solemnity while Passai Sho, in the calmness of its techniques contains an inner strength.

Pinan (Heian)

Yasutsune Itosu (1830-1915), of the Shuri-Te system, developed the Pinan, peaceful mind, series of five forms around 1905. History tells us that Itosu created the Pinans from two other Shuri katas known as Kusanku and Channan. The Channan kata has been lost, but legend has it that Bushi Matsumura, Itosu's teacher, either devised these kata or they were an older set of Chinese kata passed on by Matsumura. These forms were taught to elementary school children in Okinawa and when Gichin Funakoshi was hired by Japan to teach karate; he used these as the main portion of kata. Funakoshi modified the order of the first two Pinans and changed the name to Heian.

The five katas follow a sequence designed to introduce the beginner to kata and to progressively introduce more techniques as the student advances. The series incorporates almost all of the basic stances and many of the basic techniques of the various Okinawan systems of karate, thereby making the Pinans suitable for beginners and intermediates. Mastering each form requires years of practice in order to understand the finer points of each movement. Although the Pinans do not contain symbolic movements often seen in more advanced kata, there are a variety of combat interpretations for several of the basic techniques included in the forms. Understanding the techniques and their usage against the attacker will help the student to take away a practical application from the Pinans.

Rohai (Meikyo)

Rohai translates to "white heron" or "vision of a crane". This kata is also a Tomari-Te kata with a long history. The exact composer is unknown though the kata was probably brought to Okinawa by Karate Sakagura. The most characteristic technique of this kata is the one-foot standing stance (crane-like) with the other foot drawn to deliver a kick and to shift the body from attack.

Seisan (Seishan) kata is named after a famous Chinese martial artist who lived on the island of Okinawa around 1700. It is said that he was one of the greatest karate men of that era. Seisan is associated with an astronomer and map maker called Takahara Perchin who was the first teacher of "Tode" Sakugawa. The kata is also known to have been performed by some of the greatest karate men in the history of the art including Bushi Matsumura, Yasutsune Itosu, and Chotoku Kyan. Seisan is used in many Okinawan systems such as Isshinryu, ShorinRyu, and Shurite. However, as with many other forms, the kata differs slightly between styles.

Seisan is said to be the oldest kata still in use. The kata translates to the number "13" or "30" and its roots can be traced back to China. The unique thing about this kata is that there are two quite different versions. The Naha-Te version of Seisan favors the Chinese style and the Shuri-Te version had its own evolution. The Shuri-Te version can be traced back to Bushi Matsumura and includes techniques repeated in combinations of three, open-handed blocks and a defense against groin kicks.

As with the Ananku kata, Seisan incorporates the pivots and head turning action. Toward the kata's midpoint, there is a set of three double blocking maneuvers that can be interpreted as side blocks combined with center blocks. The follow-up movement of the center block is one of the unique features of Seisan. The two interpretations are of a two-finger spear thrust to the eyes, or of an arm grab. The hidden movement would come with the arm grab which would be an overhand punch with the other hand. The foot movements in the form are always useful in getting inside the opponent's legs, attacking and destroying his balance.

The Japanese translation of the form, Hangetsu, means half-moon and is derived from the Sanshin stance and hand movements in the form. The stances and hand movements include semi-circular paths.

Gojushiho (Useshi)

Useshi is usually called Gojushiho, which means 54 steps whose movements are said to resemble a drunken man.

Wankan (Matsukaze)

The exact origin of this kata is unknown, but it has been handed down through the Tomari-Te system. The kata is characterized by the unitary sequence of the techniques of offense and defense, which look elegant and powerful.

Wansu (Empi)

Wansu (Wanshu) is one of the most popular forms among Okinawan systems and has been used for many years, undergoing many modifications. Even today, there are several variations of this traditional form. Wansu, is said to have been named after a Chinese envoy to Okinawa who happened to be a martial artist. It is believed that Wansu originated in China around 1690, making it one of the oldest Okinawan forms. Wansu was primarily used around the village of Tomari and therefore part of the Tomari-Te system. There is also a Chinese name that the form is translated to mean Flying Swallow.

The kata includes a distinctive upper-level attack followed by the defender grasping the opponent and drawing him inward, simultaneously jumping in and attacking again. This movement resembles the up and down and flipping away flight of a swallow.

The form emphasizes speed and contains a throwing technique. Towards the end of the form, there are a series of moves in which the karateka picks up the attacker and dumps him to the ground. For this reason, Wansu kata is known as "the Dumping Form". Because the form emphasizes very strong vertical punches, it is also known as the "Strong Arm Form". Tatsuo Shimabuku referred to Wansu as the "Dragon Boy" form due to the strong movement of the downward strike or block from the T-stance, which feels like a sweep of a dragon's tail.

The primary technique of Wansu is the vertical punch. The "hidden" punch is the second vertical punch of each series which is executed while drawing the opposite hand to the neck. In some systems, this punch is delivered as a fore-knuckle punch.

8. Multiple-Person Kata

Two types of multiple-person kata have been developed. The first is basically an introduction to sparring employing one or two movements between an attacker and a defender. The second consists of a flowing series of movements between two or more participants investigating the timing, distance, and intersection of proper technique.

Ippon Kumite or one-step sparring practices a defense against a single attack. An example would have the attacker lunge punch to the mid-section while the defender middle blocks. A counter-attack may also be added to the defenders' technique, block-then-punch.

Nippon Kumite or two-step sparring is similar but with the addition of a second attack.

The Kojosho two-person and three-person forms are examples of more flowing forms which investigate motion and interplay between combatants.

9. Kata Usage

The common kata discussed earlier are used throughout many styles of karate. The following table lists several of the styles and the kata used by them. It is easy to see why several of the kata used by the Kojosho system were chosen, partly by their wide usage and partly by their good introduction of basic posture and stances. The Pinan kata are good examples of basic kata which are used throughout much of karate. These forms provide a strong basis for students to be able to recognize and participate in kata at many other schools and styles.

Japanese	Okinawan	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
Heian Nidan	Pinan Shodan	x	x			x				x	x		x	
Heian Shodan	Pinan Nidan	x	x			x				x	x		x	
Heian Sandan	Pinan Sandan	x	x			x				x	x		x	
Heian Yondan	Pinan Yondan		x			x				x	x		x	
Heian Godan	Pinan Godan		x			x				x	x		x	
Bassai Dai	Passai Sho	x	x			x			x	x		x	x	x
Kanku Dai	Kusanku Dai	x	x			x				x	x	x		x
Bassai Sho	Passai Dai		x							x	x			x
Kanku Sho	Kusanku Sho	x	x				x		x					x
Chinte	Chinte		x									x		x
Empi	Wansu	x	x			x	x		x					x
Gankaku	Chinto			x		x	x			x	x	x	x	x
Gojushiho	Useshi, Gojushiho									x	x	x		x
Hangetsu	Seisan		x	x	x	x	x	x		x		x		x
Jiin	Jiin												x	x
Jion	Jion	x				x							x	x
Jitte	Jitte		x			x							x	x
Meikyo	Rohai										x		x	x
Nijushiho	Niseshi		x											x
Sochin	Sochin		x				x	x						x
Tekki Shodan	Naihanchi Shodan					x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x
Tekki Nidan	Naihanchi Nidan	x				x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x
Tekki Sandan	Naihanchi Sandan	x				x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x
Unsu	Unshu							x						x
Wankan	Wankan										x		x	

A - Cerio's Kenpo (American Karate)
B - Budokan Karate (Australian Karate)
C - Chito-Ryu (Japanese Karate)
D - Goju-Ryu (Japanese Karate, Chojun Miyagi System)
E - Kyokushinkai (Japanese Karate, Masutatu Oyama System)
F - Isshin-Ryu (Okinawan Karate, Tatsuo Shimabuku System)
G - Naha-Te (Okinawan Karate, Pre-1900 Shorei-Ryu)
H - Shorei-Goju (Okinawan Karate, Robert Trias System)
I - Shorin-Ryu (Okinawan Karate)
J - Matsubayashi-Ryu (Okinawan Karate, Shoshin Nagamine System)
K - Shuri-Te (Okinawan Karate, Pre-1900 Shorin Ryu)
L - Tomari-Te (Okinawan Karate, Pre-1900 Shorin-Ryu)
M - Kojosho Kempo

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