

# White, Gold, Orange & Blue Class

SHORIN-RYU KARATE

# WGOB

初段  
右者空手  
を以て本  
頭書の  
一九九七年  
沖繩小林流空  
館長範士

## IMPORTANT TERMS:

Kyotusuke **attention**Rei **bow**Yoi **mentally prepare**Kamae **physically prepare**Hajime **begin**Yame **stop**Migi-ni **to the right**Hidari-ni **to the left**Shome-ni **to the front**Dachi **stance**Shizentai dachi **front stance**Zenkutsu dachi **long front stance**Kokutsu dachi **back stance**Neko ashi dachi **cat stance**Uke **block**Tzuki **punch**

Kyoshi Herten performing an advanced kata (May 2007)

## THIS ISSUE'S FOCUS:

# Kata: the Language of Karate

A student once asked me, "why do we have to learn these kata? We do the same moves during BASICS at the beginning of each class!"

It's true that the stances, blocks, strikes, and kicks found in the kihon kata are covered during BASICS. So what is kata really teaching us? Is it about memorization? In a small way, perhaps. But remember that we are learning a *martial art*. If you are sparring with someone, do you stand in one spot and execute your moves?

No, you need to move or you will surely lose. Kata teaches you how to flow back and forth from defense to offense: attacking, withdrawing, feinting, and so on. You can look at kata as the glue that connects the individual moves that we learn and practice during BASICS.

"OK," the student asks, "if it's all about fighting, why don't we just spar every class? Why do we have to learn all these kata?"

But it's *not* all about fighting. Our martial **art** has a rich history which traces back to the introduction of zen, yoga, and indian boxing to

China 1500 years ago, evolving to Wushu (Kung Fu) over hundreds of years, and finally crossing the China Sea to Okinawa, where it evolved into something totally unique.

The Okinawan budo masters transformed "Chinese hand" into "karate-do," *the way of the empty hand*. For them, it was a way of living. Karate is about self-control, and developing your skills so that you can avoid combat unless there is no other option.

If you just want to learn how to fight, you are in the wrong kind of school. Karate is about keeping the peace, and self-improvement.

William Shakespeare took every-day words and arranged them into elegant sonnets and prose.

If the individual moves that we practice during BASICS are "words," then like Shakespeare, our kata puts these "words" together to create a rich and meaningful statement.

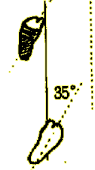
In this way, you can think of kata as the *language of karate*. Let the history and essence of karate-do flow speak through you when you practice each one.



# Kihon Ichidan (basic kata #1)

## By the Numbers (starting from ready position)

1. Step L forward into front stance /  
L open hand block ("wax on") /  
L Grab
2. R middle punch (KIAI!)
3. R step forward into front stance
4. L middle punch
5. L step forward into front stance
6. R middle punch
7. R step forward into front stance
8. L middle punch
9. L step forward into front stance
10. R middle punch (KIAI!)
11. L step back into cat stance /  
R outside block
12. R step back into cat stance /  
L outside block
13. L step back into cat stance /  
R outside block (KIAI!)
14. Recover to ready position



Cat Stance  
Neko ashi dachi

# Kihon Nidan (basic kata #2)

## By the Numbers (starting from ready position)

1. Step L forward into front stance /  
L open hand block ("wax on") /  
L Grab
2. R face punch (KIAI!)
3. R step forward into front stance
4. L face punch
5. L step forward into front stance
6. R face punch
7. R step forward into front stance
8. L face punch
9. L step forward into front stance
10. R face punch (KIAI!)
11. L step back into cat stance /  
R inside block / R low block
12. R step back into cat stance /  
L inside block / L low block
13. L step back into cat stance /  
R inside block / R low block (KIAI!)

# Kihon Sandan (basic kata #3)

## By the Numbers (starting from ready position)

1. Step L forward into front stance /  
L high block (KIAI!)
2. R step forward into front stance /  
R high block
3. L step forward into front stance /  
L high block
4. R step forward into front stance /  
R high block
5. L step forward into front stance /  
L high block (KIAI!)
6. L step back into cat stance /  
R inside block
7. R step back into cat stance /  
L inside block
8. L step back into cat stance /  
R inside block (KIAI!)
9. Recover to ready position

“ *To subdue the enemy without  
fighting is the highest skill.*  
- Gichin Funakoshi

# Kihon Yondan (basic kata #4)

## By the Numbers (starting from ready position)

1. L step to the left into cat stance /  
L outside block
2. R step forward into front stance /  
R middle punch (KIAI!)
3. Mawatte R step opposite way into cat stance /  
R outside block
4. L step forward into front stance /  
L middle punch
5. L step *toward the front* into cat stance /  
L outside block
6. R step forward into front stance /  
R middle punch
7. L step forward into front stance /  
L middle punch
8. R step forward into front stance /  
R middle punch (KIAI!)
9. L foot comes up to R foot, spin backwards 270 /  
L step into cat stance /  
L outside block
10. R step forward into front stance /  
R middle punch
11. Mawatte R step opposite way into cat stance /  
R outside block
12. L step forward into front stance /  
L middle punch
13. L step *toward the back* into cat stance /  
L outside block
14. R step forward into front stance /  
R middle punch
15. L step forward into front stance /  
L middle punch
16. R step forward into front stance /  
R middle punch (KIAI!)
17. L foot comes up to R foot, spin backwards 270 /  
L step into cat stance /  
L outside block
18. R step forward into front stance /  
R middle punch
19. Mawatte R step opposite way into cat stance /  
R outside block
20. L step forward into front stance /  
L middle punch
21. Recover to ready position

# Kihon Godan (basic kata #5)

## By the Numbers

This kata is the same as kihon yondan, except that you must do a front kick before every punch. This is a rear leg kick on the same side as the punch which follows!

Important notes:

1. Recoil each front kick back to the other knee, so that you can place the foot down into a proper front stance. THEN PUNCH! Do not punch until the kick is recoiled and put down.
2. When you kick, leave the hand that was already out in place. In other words, FREEZE the other hand until the kick

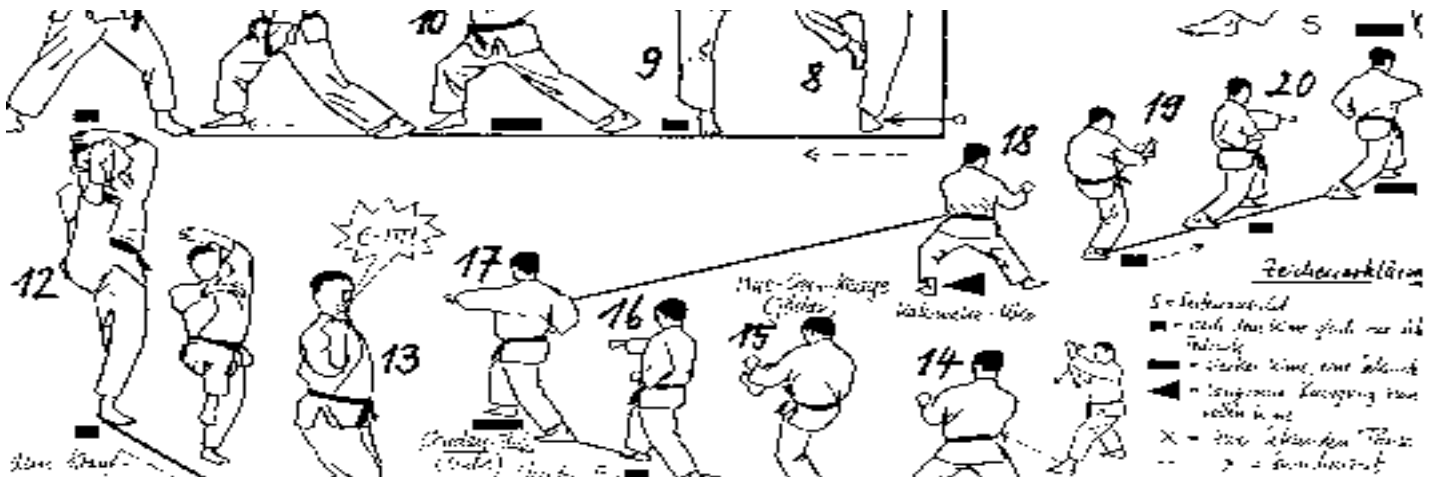
is completed and put down in a good stance. Then you have this hand in front of you to push-pull out the punch which follows! Remember that we never strike or even block without some kind of push-pull – this is where the power comes from!

3. When you do the two spinning turns, draw you back leg up to the front leg before turning. Maintain a center of gravity which allows maximum mobility - this is why we recoil kicks and keep our elbows in as much as possible!



Long Front Stance  
Zen kutsu dachi

“The more you practice the more  
modest you should be with others.  
This is the true karateka.  
- Ankoh Itosu



## SUMMARY & REVIEW

# Kata commentary and notes

After learning the first three kihon kata, many students have remarked to me that the third one seemed easier than the first two.

### Shouldn't Kihon Sandan be first?

Consider that in Kihon ichidan and nidan, stepping forward and then punching are kept as separate steps. By the time you reach the third kata, it is expected that you can step forward and block at the same time – while still finding your stance properly. Now you see how the layers of the onion are slowly but surely peeled away as you learn our style. At each turn you are challenged just a little bit more. But because each experience builds on all the previous ones, it will seem easier over time - even as you advance higher and higher.

Thus like a house, karate must be built upon a strong foundation. You must pour solid footings before you build walls; and erect good walls before you can add a roof. If you skip anything below, everything above will crumble.

Think of your stance (dachi) as the foundation, and your blocks and strikes as the walls and roof.

Be patient and learn the basics as best you can. Everything in your karate future is built upon what you learn today!

### Is Kata Like a Real Fight?

Some kata are more realistic than others, but they are not meant to emulate actual combat. To be sure they are filled with blocks, strikes, stances, and transitions, but kata are also highly representational. Some aspects are abstracted from reality.

### I can't remember when to kiai in the kata!

Normally the first and last attacking moves require a kiai. Also, the final strike at the end of a series or direction often require a kiai. These are general guidelines.

### What are Bunkai and Oyo Bunkai?

These are versions of our kata which are more representational and less metaphorical. *Bunkai* reveals the essential elements

of the kata, whereas *oyo bunkai* reveals the *application* of the kata.

You can perform bunkai and oyo bunkai as kata (i.e., by yourself), or in a han ("group"), where you begin surrounded by attackers. Don't worry: their attacking moves are prearranged, and are intended to allow you to perform the kata in the center.

Thus learning a bunkai or oyo bunkai requires us to learn each attacking position as well. Han usually have three or four attackers, each of whom will typically have 1, 2 or 3 attacks to execute.

### Who starts the Bunkai or Oyo Bunkai when we do it in Han?

The first attacker is normally (but not always) located to the left of the person performing the kata in the center. This attacker should kaia and then attack after a second. The person performing the kata represents an innocent person who is forced to defend himself or herself.

|| **A**ct like a man of thought.  
Think like a man of action.  
- Thomas Mann