

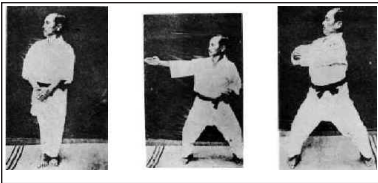
# White, Gold, Orange & Blue Class

SHORIN-RYU KARATE

# WGOB

## THIS ISSUE'S FOCUS:

# Inside naihanchi shodan



Gichin Funakoshi, student of Itosu sensei and later founder of Shotokan karate, performs the first few moves of Naihanchi Shodan kata

### IMPORTANT TERMS:

Naihanchi dachi **iron horse stance**

Yoi **mentally prepare**

Kamae **physically prepare**

Ura ken **back knuckle strike**

Haito **ridge hand**

Tsuki **punch**

Kagi Tsuki **hook punch**

Empi Tsuki **elbow strike**

Yoko **the side**

Gedan Barai **low block**

Chudan uke **outside block**

Sasae uke **double-arm block**

Ashi barai **leg sweep**

Chidori ashi **cross-step**

Naihanchi kata are perhaps the deepest and most ancient ones within our style. The first one: Naihanchi shodan, is practiced in one form or another in nearly every offshoot of Shorin Ryu karate-do.

The very essence of Naihanchi shodan is *the stance*. The very name naihanchi has come to mean "iron horse". Funakoshi sensei used to tell his students to imagine that they were fighting on horseback, swinging a sword and spear with their arms, while controlling the horse with only their knees. In this way, no matter which way your upper body moves, your knees must stay rigid and pointing forward, tightly gripping the horse. This paints a vivid picture that is easy to keep in mind.

The iron horse stance demands that you point your toes forward, knees slightly bent, with toes gripping the floor. Your back is straight and your feet have a little more than a shoulder width between them. Doing this stance correctly is not comfortable, and is hard on the quadriceps. But

it is critical in centering your weight and focusing your chi (energy/spirit). And your quads will gain strength the more you do it.

The sideways cross-stepping that we do in this kata are unique. Imagine that you are in a dark alley with your back to the wall. There are attackers around you, but you are not sure exactly where.

When you step, concentrate on keeping your head at the same level, i.e., without bobbing up and down. When you make the first step out into the naihanchi stance, that should set your head height for the rest of the kata. Use your knees to keep your height constant as you step.

The outside blocks in moves 15-17 and 33-35 are noteworthy because your knuckles are to the back of the room. In other words, your hand is turned 90° from normal.

If you find this kata more difficult than usual to learn, you are not alone! Don't worry. Take your time and after you master the basic moves, try to understand the essence of this powerful and classic kata.



## NAIHANCHI SHODAN

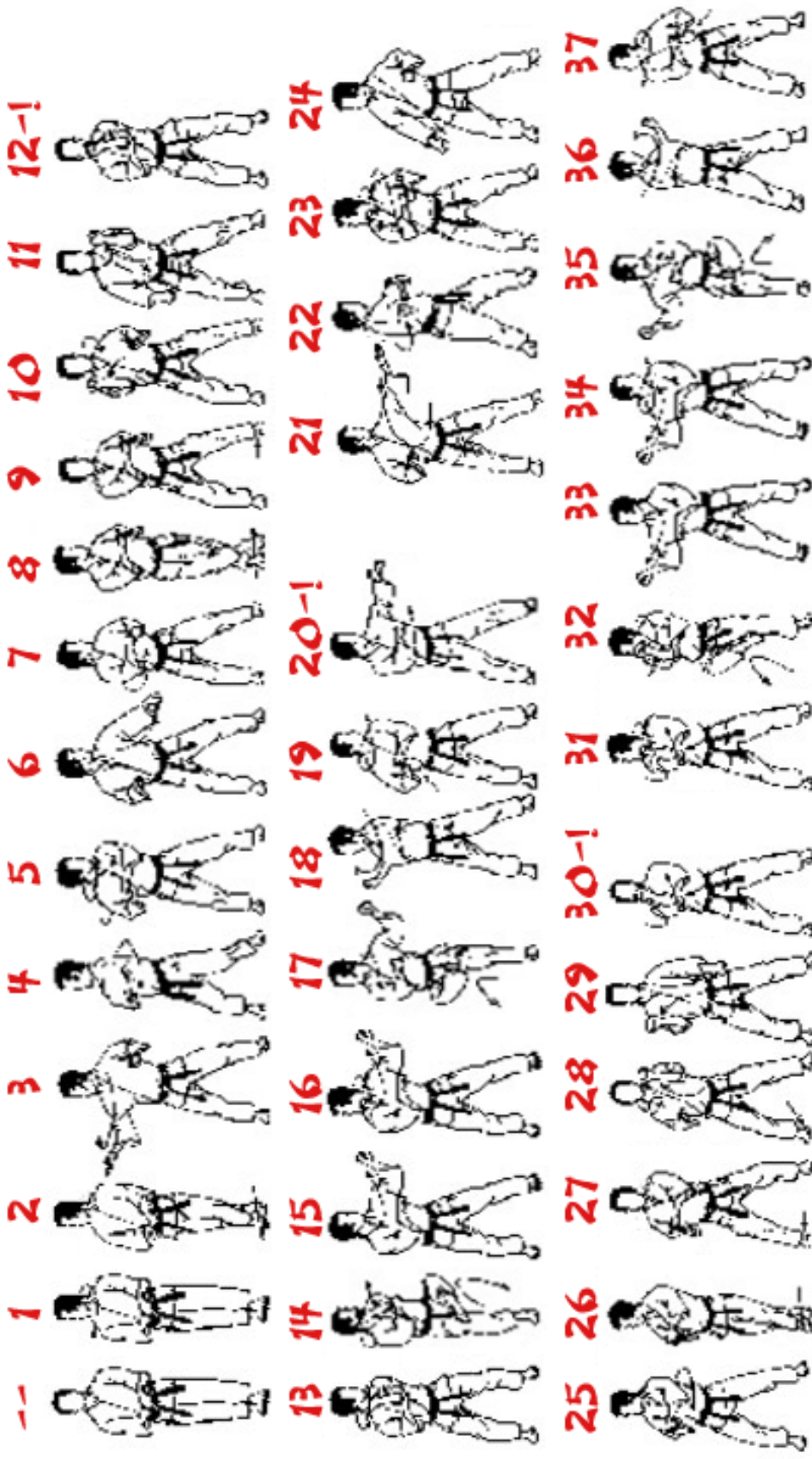
# Naihanchi Shodan (iron horse kata #1)

### By the Numbers (starting from kamae position)

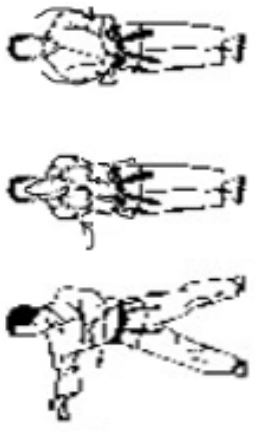
1. Look R
2. Cross-step L over R (chidori ashi)
3. Step out into naihanchi stance (R behind L)
4. R ridgehand (haito) (thumb over palm)
5. L elbow smash (empi tsuki)
6. L low-block (gedan barai), R hand at chamber
7. R hook punch (kagi tsuki)
8. Cross-step R over L (chidori ashi)
9. Step out into naihanchi stance
10. R outside block (chudan uke)
11. Double arm block (sasae uke)
12. L back-knuckle strike (ura ken) (KIAI!)
13. Look left
14. L sweep leg (hidarini ashi barai)
15. L outside block (chudan uke) (knuckles to the back of the room) and R hook punch (kagi tsuki)
16. Look R
17. R Sweep leg (hidarini ashi barai)
18. L block across (elbow ends above back of R hand)
19. Set on R hip ("cup and saucer")
20. L straight punch (tsuki), R hook punch (kagi tsuki) (KIAI!)
21. Drop left hand to belt knot, then L haito (thumb over palm)
22. R elbow smash (empi tsuki)
23. Look R
24. R low block (gedan barai)
25. L hook punch (kagi tsuki)
26. Cross-step (chidori ashi)
27. Step out into naihanchi stance
28. L outside block (chudan uke)
29. Double-arm block (sasae uke)
30. R back-knuckle strike (ura ken) (KIAI!)
31. Look R
32. R leg sweep (migini ashi barai)
33. R outside block (knuckles to the back of the room) and L hook punch
34. Look L
35. L Sweep leg (hidarini ashi barai)
36. R block across (elbow ends above back of L hand)
37. Set on L hip ("cup and saucer")
38. R straight punch (tsuki), L hook punch (kagi tsuki) (KIAI!)
39. Draw in and recover, L hand over R in front of your face
40. Drop hands down still together in front of obi knot and bow, feet together

*Teachers open the door, but you must enter by yourself*  
- Chinese proverb

*Shorin-ryu teaches one to focus on one's breathing and to learn to control it. This is "tan gokui" - the secret of the lower abdomen.*  
- Iha sensei

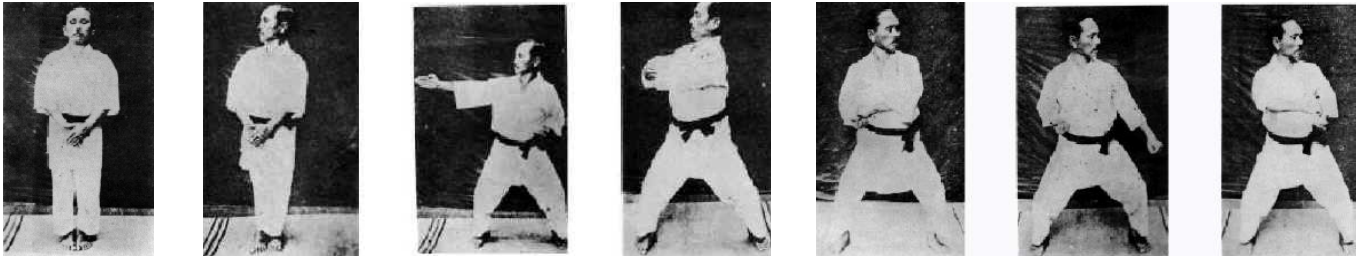


38-i 39 / 40 -END



# NAIHANCHI SHODAN

There is an animation of this kata on our website, at:  
[http://ichiban.dewamerica.com/kata/naihanchi\\_shodan.html](http://ichiban.dewamerica.com/kata/naihanchi_shodan.html)



## SUMMARY & REVIEW

# Naihanchi background and comments

Even a beginner student will notice that there is something different about Naihanchi shodan. In fact, there are three naihanchi kata in our style (Naihanchi shodan, nidan and sandan). Why are they different from the rest of our kata? The explanation goes back as far as the history of Okinawan karate-do itself.

You may have heard of Kusanko, a real or mythic Chinese military envoy who spent many years in Okinawa. Kusanko had learned kung fu in the famous Shaolin temples of China. He took on students in Okinawa, and spread the kung fu influence to the island nation. His most famous student was Sakugawa.

Sakugawa eventually combined Shuri te, one of the major native martial arts of the Okinawa, with the Tode, or "Chinese hand," that he had learned from Kusanko.

He taught this blend to Soken Matsumura, who is today regarded as the "father of karate do".

Matsumura sensei developed into a highly skilled and famous practitioner of karate, even serving as the as the personal bodyguard

for the 17th, 18th and 19th Kings of Okinawa (then called Ryukyuu),

Matsumura studied with other legends of the day, including Chinto, Iwah, and Wai Shin Zan -- all Chinese martial artists living for a while in Okinawa. As part of his duties as a bodyguard and advisor to kings, Matsumura made several trips to China. It was during one of them that he studied in the city of Fuchow, in the Fukien province. He may have brought back naihanchi kata, or perhaps it was already known to him.

Today many people believe that this kata comes from the Shouting White Crane style of Kung Fu. Some also believe that Matsumura's student Itosu may have added naihanchi nidan and sandan, but no one knows for sure. It could have been that the original Chinese naihanchi was 100 steps long, and it was broken into three kata to make it easier to learn. We will probably never know the exact details.

If you have been to any of the karate camps with Hanshi Herten, you will know that Hanshi has researched several branches of White Crane and

incorporated some of the more interesting kata. There is a clear connection between White Crane and Shorin ryu do even today.

Today, the Naihanchi kata are some of the clearest representations of the Chinese influence on our karate-do.

Early Okinawan karate masters Sakugawa and Matsumura interpreted what they learned from their Chinese teachers, harmonizing it with their Okinawan sensibility.

If you look on the internet you will see that Naihanchi Shodan is a famous kata that has been interpreted over and over again by countless styles in China, Okinawa, Japan, and worldwide. Using modern tools like YouTube you can see how this "classic" kata has unlimited varieties. Some are close to our interpretation, while others are much different. None are right or wrong: they are simply different.

Study well the Shidokan Shorin Ryu version that we inhabit - these kata, starting with Naihanchi Shodan - are classics in their own right, and worth the effort.

// *Depending on the circumstance,*  
*you should be: hard as a*  
*diamond, flexible as a willow,*  
*smooth-flowing like water, or as*  
*empty as space.*  
 - Morihei Ueshiba

