

White, Gold, Orange & Blue Class

SHORIN-RYU KARATE

WGOB

THIS PRIMER'S FOCUS:

Pinan shodan—and *kime*



Ankoh Itosu sensei is widely credited with developing or adapting the pinan kata. He is the most famous student of Matsumura sensei, and teacher of Chibana sensei.

IMPORTANT TERMS:

Neko ashi dachi **cat stance**

Chudan uke **outside block**

Soto uke **inside block**

Age uke **high block**

Shuto uke **knifehand block**

Tsuki **punch/strike**

Hiza **knee**

Empi **elbow**

Nukite **spearfinger strike**

Mae Geri **front kick**

Sasae uke **double-arm block**

Sempai **someone of higher rank**

Dohai **someone of equal rank**

Kohai **someone of lower rank**

There are five pinan kata. In our style, the first one is pinan shodan, which begins with the distinctive simultaneous outside and high block. The pinan kata emphasize close-in fighting, and follow the classic embusen, or "I-beam" pattern.

Itosu sensei is generally given credit for adapting the pinan kata and promoting them on Okinawa. Today they are taught in dozens of forms of martial arts beyond Okinawa, including Japan and Korea.

The Japanese called them Heian kata (and sometimes switch the first and second ones around), and Korean Tang Soo Do artists call them the pyung-ahn forms.

The history of the pinan kata, like a lot about karate from long ago, is a little bit murky. Some say that they were adapted from Channan kata, created by a Chinese martial artist living in Okinawa.

Other stories give that Itosu adapted them from black belt level kata like Kusanku, simplifying them for high school students to learn.

No matter what the truth is, the pinan kata are classics which have stood the test of time.

Besides the five kata themselves, we also teach bunkai and oyo bunkai for each of them. Altogether, these 15 forms become a rich tapestry of Shorin Ryu karate-do learning, which you can spend years discovering.

As with any kata, at first your goal is to simply remember the pattern and the moves. Once this essential task is complete, the real fun begins. Pinan kata will teach you *kime* (focus) and *kinkou* (balance).

As you discover pinan shodan, concentrate on keeping your weight over your centerline. When changing directions, draw in toward your center, and then move out in the new direction. Settle your hips in the direction in which you want to project your strength, then draw your power up through your centerline and out the center of your chest, where you are strong. *Kime*.

Connect your hips to the earth, and then draw that power up through your core - and the genius of pinan shodan will reveal itself to you.



PINAN SHODAN

Pinan Shodan (first Pinan kata)

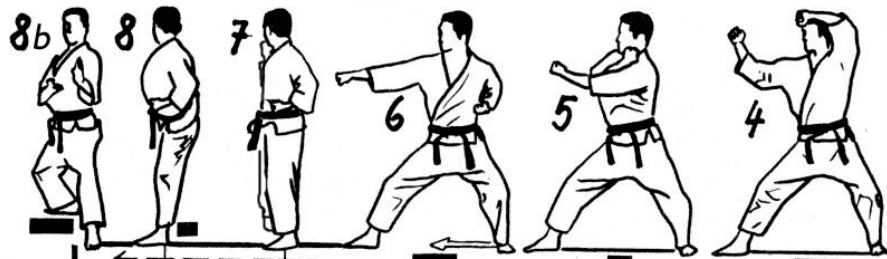
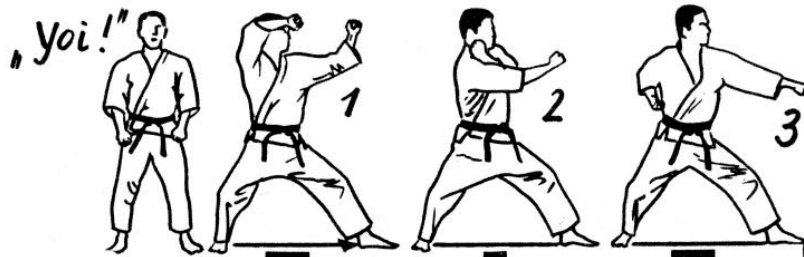
By the Numbers (starting from kamae position)

1. Look/step L cat stance, outside block L and high block R
2. Block down R hand (in front of left hand)
3. L punch
4. Muwate 180 deg to right to cat stance R, outside block R and high block L
5. Block down R hand (in front of left hand)
6. R punch
7. Turn 90 deg R toward the back, cat stance R, outside block R
8. R front kick, muwate 180 deg to front shuto uke L (supported R hand)
9. Step forward cat stance R, shuto block R (supported L hand)
10. Step forward cat stance L, shuto block L (supported R hand)
11. Step forward front stance R, nukite R (KIAI!)
12. Spin 270 deg L, cat stance L, shuto block L (supported R hand)
13. Step 45 deg R, cat stance R, shuto block R (supported L hand)
14. Step 135 de R, cat stance R, shuto block R (supported R hand)
15. Step 45 deg L, cat stance L, shuto block L (supported L hand)
16. Slide L foot to the left, just in front of your R foot, turn your hips CW into a twisted cat stance L, outside block R (now you are facing the back of the room)
17. Straighten your L foot and front kick R, land in a front stance R
18. Punch L
19. Slide R foot back and left, just in front of your R foot, turn your hips CCW into a twisted cat stance R, outside block L
20. Straighten your R foot and front kick L, land in a front stance L
21. Punch R
22. Step forward R into deep front stance, sae uke (double arm block) (KIAI!)
23. Turn 270 deg L into long front stance L, low block L
24. Step forward R into short front stance R, high block R
25. Turn 180 deg, R into long front stance R, low block R
26. Step forward L into short front stance L, high block L

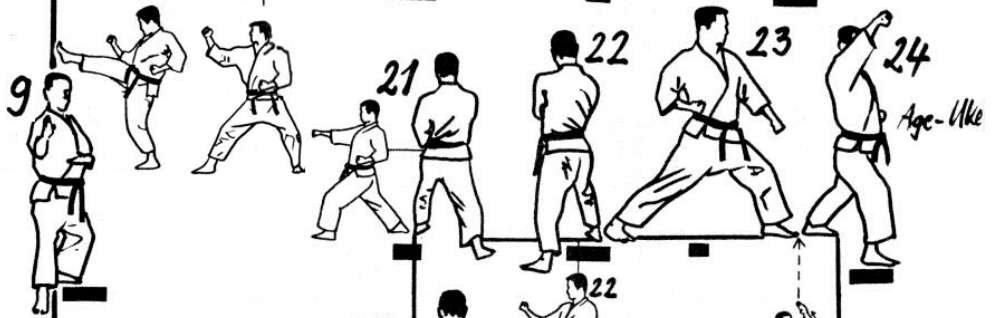
// **F**ocus on where you want to go,
not on what you fear.
- proverb //

Please take the drawings at right with a grain of salt. All of the long back stances that are shown should really be cat stances in our version of this kata! Some other differences have been touched up in the illustrations as much as possible.

Pinan Shodan



- = Kiai!
- = Same focus as with the move that follows
- = Stronger focus, 1 s pause
- > Interval
- X = 2 s pause



平安



“The student gives meaning to the belt - not the other way around. - proverb”

SUMMARY & REVIEW

Kime - peace through strength

It is especially appropriate that we talk about *kime* when we talk about the pinan kata. “Pinan” has been interpreted several ways, including “peaceful mind.” But the interpretation that makes the most sense to me is one involving peace through strength. If your karate is strong and sharp enough, you won’t need to use it!

And that brings us to *KIME*, which means FOCUS. But it is the focus not just of your eyes, or your mind, but your whole being. When you focus your strength, your weight, your breathing... in other words, your entire physical self *and* your mental state, this is *KIME*.

And *kime* is not a static state, but is the expression of your energy. In other words, you don’t just stare at something and “focus” that way -- you focus your mental and physical energy on it.

So how exactly can you improve your *kime*?

The answer is that it is actually easy, but simply takes some practice... just like almost everything that we do in the dojo! Here are some techniques which should help you to improve and develop your *kime*:

STANCE - you need to connect your center of gravity (your hips) to the power of the earth. This is done with your stance. If you are off-balance, then your power is not connected to the earth. Use your stance to tap in to the power of the earth underneath you. Does this mean that you should be rooted like a tree to the ground? Not at all - you

need to be light as a feather, but at the same time, a good stance will provide the mechanical linkage that your hips need to transfer power up to your core (more about that in a moment!).

RELAX - the secret to explosive power is that you are completely relaxed right up until the end of the technique. If you are tense all the time, you cannot release that sharp lightning strike at the end—you will be fighting yourself! Be sharp, but don’t tense up until the last instant of the strike or block.

BREATHE - Everyone knows how to breathe, right? Yes and no. You need to control your breathing in a way that is not done in normal life. The spirit yell, or *kiai*, is the perfect reminder of how to control your breathing, and then release everything at once at the end of the technique. Managing your breathing also protects you from being hit in the abdomen. It is also deeply connected to relaxation.

USE YOUR CORE - This might be the most important part of all. But it takes a little explaining. Imagine that you have to hold a heavy bowling ball in one hand for an hour. What if I told you to extend your arm and that I would place the ball on your hand? Instinctively you know that wouldn’t work; you would want to hold the ball as close to your chest as possible. It’s because you are strongest in near your core ... and weaker away.

Imagine that your core has an invisible power field that radiates a few inches around your chest and



abdomen. Always bring your blocks and strikes through your core to charge them with this power.

SUMMARY - Build each movement from a solid stance (hips to earth), stay loose and control your breathing, then bring every movement from your core to the greatest extent possible...and only release your power at the final expression of the technique. Muscle tension should only come at the very end, to provide snap, and focus your energy at one instant of release.

Put it all together, and your mind and body will focus your power like never before. That’s *kime* – and everyone can do it with some practice.

Beautiful techniques are sharp ... (and) strong techniques are beautiful.
- Chosin Chibana

Chibana sensei, late in his life, is pictured above.