

# KARATE KATAS



## Conrad Jones Karate

Compiled by Bill Menees – Updated December 18, 2005



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# 1. KATA HISTORY

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## Style Origins

The katas trained in Karate can generally be classified based on the city or region of Okinawa that they came from:

- **Shuri-te** – From the Shuri area. Shuri used to be the capital of Okinawa, and it was the home of the King and the aristocracy.
- **Naha-te** – From the Naha area. Naha is a port on the eastern coast of Okinawa (nearest to China). It was the center of the business and trade industries.
- **Tomari-te** – From the Tomari area. Tomari is a farming village on the northern end of Okinawa.

Generally speaking, Naha-te is a powerful and heavy karate while Shuri-te and Tomari-te are light and quick. These styles developed independently because of the distinct social classes in each region and because of geographic factors that made travel between the regions difficult.

Eventually, the Tomari-te style merged with the Shuri-te style because they had so many similarities. After this merger the combined Shuri-te/Tomari-te style became known as *Shorin Ryu*. The Naha-te style became known as *Shorei Ryu*. Gichin Funakoshi always used the terms Shorei Ryu and Shorin Ryu when he described the styles of Okinawan Karate and when he classified katas.

Wado Ryu Karate is most closely associated with the Shorin Ryu/Shuri-te style because Hironori Otsuka trained under Gichin Funakoshi, who was from the Shuri region.

## Shuri-te Katas

*Note:* Katas listed with underlined names below are ones we practice at our school. Names in parentheses are other common names for the same kata (typically the Funakoshi-altered names). Names after an emdash (–) indicate different popular variations of a kata.

Shuri-te is a light and quick style of Karate. Some well known Shuri-te styles are Wado Ryu, Shito Ryu, Shotokan, and Shorin Ryu.

- **Pinan** (Heian) series – **Shodan**, **Nidan**, **Sandan**, **Yondan**, **Godan**
- **Naihanchi** (Tekki) series – **Shodan**, Nidan, Sandan
- **Passai** (Bassai) – **Dai**, Sho
- **Kusanku** (Kanku) – **Dai**, Sho, Shiho
- **Jutte**
- **Jion**
- **Jiin**
- **Gojushiho**

## Naha-te Katas

Naha-te katas are generally comprised of slow, rhythmical movements, and they focus on muscle control and internal breathing (“ibuki”). The best known Naha-te style is Goju Ryu.

- **Seisan** (Hangetsu)
- **Suparinpei** (Pechurrin)
- **Sanchin**
- **Tensho**
- **Gekkisai** – Daiichi, Daini
- **Saifa**
- **Seipai**
- **Sanseiru**
- **Shisochin**
- **Kururunfa**
- **Seienchin**

Funakoshi considered Naihanchi, Jutte, and Jion to be Naha-te (Shorei Ryu) style katas, whereas most people consider them to be Shuri-te (Shorin Ryu) style katas. As we train them in Wado Ryu, they have elements of both styles. All three have light and quick portions, but all three also have slow portions where muscle control and internal breathing (“ibuki”) are emphasized. For example, Naihanchi uses ibuki during the opening sequence and when the hands withdraw slowly during the middle of the kata. Jutte uses ibuki while standing up after the sequence of double soto ukes. Jion uses ibuki near the middle after the sequence of kokutsa dachis.

## Tomari-te Katas

Tomari-te is a light-moving and quick style, and many of its kata include jumping.

- **Chinto** (Gankaku)
- **Rohai** (Meikyo) – **Shodan**, Nidan, Sandan
- **Wanshu** (Empi)
- **Wankan** (Matsukaze)
- **Unsu**

Pinan Godan has some elements from Tomari-te, but it is generally classified with the other Pinan katas as a Shuri-te style kata.

## Other Katas

The following katas were heavily influenced by Chinese sources, and they don’t fall into one of the regional Okinawan styles:

- **Neseishi** (Nijushiho)
- **Sochin**
- **Ananku**

## Influential Okinawan Karateka

The following short biographies are included because these men greatly influenced the development of the Karate katas that are practiced today. To fully understand the progression of the katas requires at least some familiarity with these men.

### **Chatan Yara (1668 - 1756)**

Chatan Yara (a.k.a. Yara Guwa) is a legendary figure in the Okinawan martial arts legacy. He traveled to Fukien, China in order to learn Chinese Kempo and weaponry, and he stayed there for 20 years. His teacher was Wong Chung-Yoh.

### **Takahara Peichin (1683 - 1760)**

Takahara was born in Akata-Cho, Southern Shuri to an upper class family of Okinawan society. The term “Peichin” stands for “senior”. He was a martial arts expert, and some sources claim that he was a Buddhist monk from Shaolin. He was also an expert in astronomy and cartography, and he mapped Okinawa.

Takahara traveled a lot during his lifetime. He was well known as a great fighter who emphasized ethical principles such as “Ijo” (compassion, humility, and modesty), “Fo” (seriousness, devotion, and dedication) and “Katsu” (deep understanding and essence of techniques). Takahara regarded martial arts as way of life, and he is considered a “father of Okinawan Karate”.

Takahara attributed major importance to katas. He saw kata practice as an efficient way to understand and improve fighting techniques.

Takahara was a student of Chatan Yara, and Takahara’s most famous student was “Tode” Sakugawa.

### **Kushanku Kung Yang**

*Note:* Kushanku was not Okinawan, but he was very significant to the development of Okinawan Karate, so I’ve included him in this list.

Kushanku was a Chinese military envoy from the Ming dynasty period. He was sent to Okinawa in 1756. The Chinese delegation included 36 families, and they settled in Kanemura, near Naha.

Kushanku was a well known Kempo expert (Shaolin Kung-Fu/Quan-Fa), and his influence on Okinawan martial arts (the local “Te”) was very significant in both knowledge transfer and style. Kushanku taught many martial artists in Okinawa, among them Chatan Yara and his famous student, Kanga Sakugawa.

In 1762 Kushanku completed his mission and returned to China, his homeland.

### **Kanga “Tode” Sakugawa (1733 - 1815)**

Sakugawa began studying Karate in his childhood, and his first teacher was Takahara Peichin. In his twenties, Sakugawa began to study with Kushanku. Sakugawa was the first teacher who used the term “Tode” (“Chinese hand”), and thereafter, he was called “Tode” Sakugawa.

This information reinforces the general opinion that around this time two fighting systems existed in Okinawa concurrently. The first was the local “Te” (“Hand”), and the second was “Tode” (“Chinese Hand”). Sakugawa integrated the two systems, and the title “The first teacher” was given to him.

Sakugawa’s best known student was Sokon Matsumura.

### **Sokon “Bushi” Matsumura (1797 - 1889)**

One of very few awarded the title of “Bushi” (warrior) by the royal family, Matsumura is one of the most well known Okinawan martial artists, and many stories and legends are told about him. He was the most famous student of Sakugawa.

After his teacher passed away he was adopted by the royal family (the Sho family) and was sent to study in the Shaolin temple in China. After his return to Okinawa, Matsumura served as a bodyguard of the royal descendants of the 17<sup>th</sup> king (Shoen), the 18<sup>th</sup> king (Shoko), and the 19<sup>th</sup> king (Shotai).

Matsumura is considered to be the “Father of Shorin Ryu”. He was the first to systemize the Shuri-te style, which became known as Shorin Ryu in days to come.

Matsumura taught many famous students such as Anko Itosu, Yasutsune “Anko” Azato, Kentsu Yabu, Chomu Hanashiro, and Chotoku Kiyun. Matsumura also wrote a few books about martial arts and warrior ethics.

### **Yasutsune “Anko” Itosu (1830 - 1915)**

Itosu was born in Shuri and studied under Sokon Matsumura. His nickname was “Anko”, which means “iron horse”. Itosu promoted Karate as a healthy discipline and an activity for body strengthening. He brought Karate into the education system and from there to the entire population of Okinawa.

Among his famous students are Kenwa Mabuni (founder of Shito Ryu), Gichin Funakoshi (founder of Shotokan), Choshin Chibana (founder of Kobayashi Ryu), Choki Motobu, Moden Yabiku, and Kanken Toyoma.

Itosu also formulated the Pinan (Heian) katas based on the older Chinese “Chan-nan” training forms.

### **Kanryu Higaonna (1851 - 1915)**

Higaonna (a.k.a. Higashionna) was born in Naha and initially learned Karate under Sokon Matsumura. Later on Higaonna traveled to Fukien, China and learned Kempo under the teacher Liu Liukung. After his return to Okinawa, Higaonna developed the Naha-te style, which is characterized by a combination of soft and hard techniques, breathing accentuation, and White Crane moves in its katas. His student and successor was Chojun Miyagi (founder of Goju Ryu).

### **Seisho (Kamadeunchu) Aragaki (1840-1918)**

Aragaki taught a Naha-te style similar to Higaonna’s, and he may have been one of Higaonna’s teachers. He trained in mainland China for some time in Fuzhou in the Fukien

province. He is most notable for introducing the Neseishi, Unsu, and Sochin katas to Okinawa, but he was also a superb weapons master. There are still bo and sai katas practiced today that bear his name.

### **Gichin Funakoshi (1868 - 1957)**

Funakoshi was the founder of the Shotokan style. He was born in the Okinawan capital of Shuri into a family of the Shizoku class (i.e., upper class). Funakoshi was instructed by Anko Azato and Anko Itosu, and he was responsible for introducing Karate to Japan in the 1920s.

He was also responsible for changing (or defining, depending how you look at it) the meaning of the word “Karate”. He changed the “kara” symbol in Karate from the old symbol meaning “China” to the new symbol meaning “empty”. The result of this change is that “Karate”, which formerly translated to “Chinese hand” now translates to “empty hand”.

Hironori Otsuka, the founder of Wado Ryu, was one of Funakoshi’s senior students from 1922 to 1934.

### **Kenwa Mabuni (1889 - 1952)**

In 1902, at the age of 13, Mabuni began learning Shuri-te from Anko Itosu, in Shuri. In 1909, in order to broaden his knowledge, Mabuni started to train in Naha under Kanryu Higaonna and continued there until Higaonna passed away in 1915.

Anko Itosu, Mabuni’s other teacher, also passed away in 1915. According to legend, Mabuni was so upset that he visited Itosu’s grave daily for more than a year and performed katas each day in order to pay respect to his teacher.

Mabuni also studied under Seisho Aragaki, who taught a similar style as Higaonna and was also a Kobu-Jutsu (the art of traditional weaponry) expert. Arakaki taught bo and sai.

In 1929, Mabuni founded a new Karate style and named it “Shito Ryu” in memory of his teachers: Anko Itosu and Kanryu Higaonna (“Shi” for Itosu and “To” for Higaonna). Shito Ryu’s syllabus includes 60 to 70 katas that contain varied elements from Shuri-te, Naha-te, and Tomari-te.

### **Choki Motobu (1871 -1944)**

Motobu was born in Shuri, third son to a distinguished family. At that time, attention and education were granted mainly to the family successor, which was the firstborn son, especially if a traditional art was involved. The firstborn son in the Motobu family was Choyu, and he was the natural successor of the traditional family fighting art, the “Motobu Udon Te”, while the other sons, Choshin and Choki were secondary. Therefore, Choki Motobu covertly learned the art of fighting.

He gained the nickname “Saru” (“monkey man”) for his strength and agility. In his youth, Choki was known as a belligerent person who sought out fights in order to examine techniques he had learned; hence teachers refused to accept him as their student.

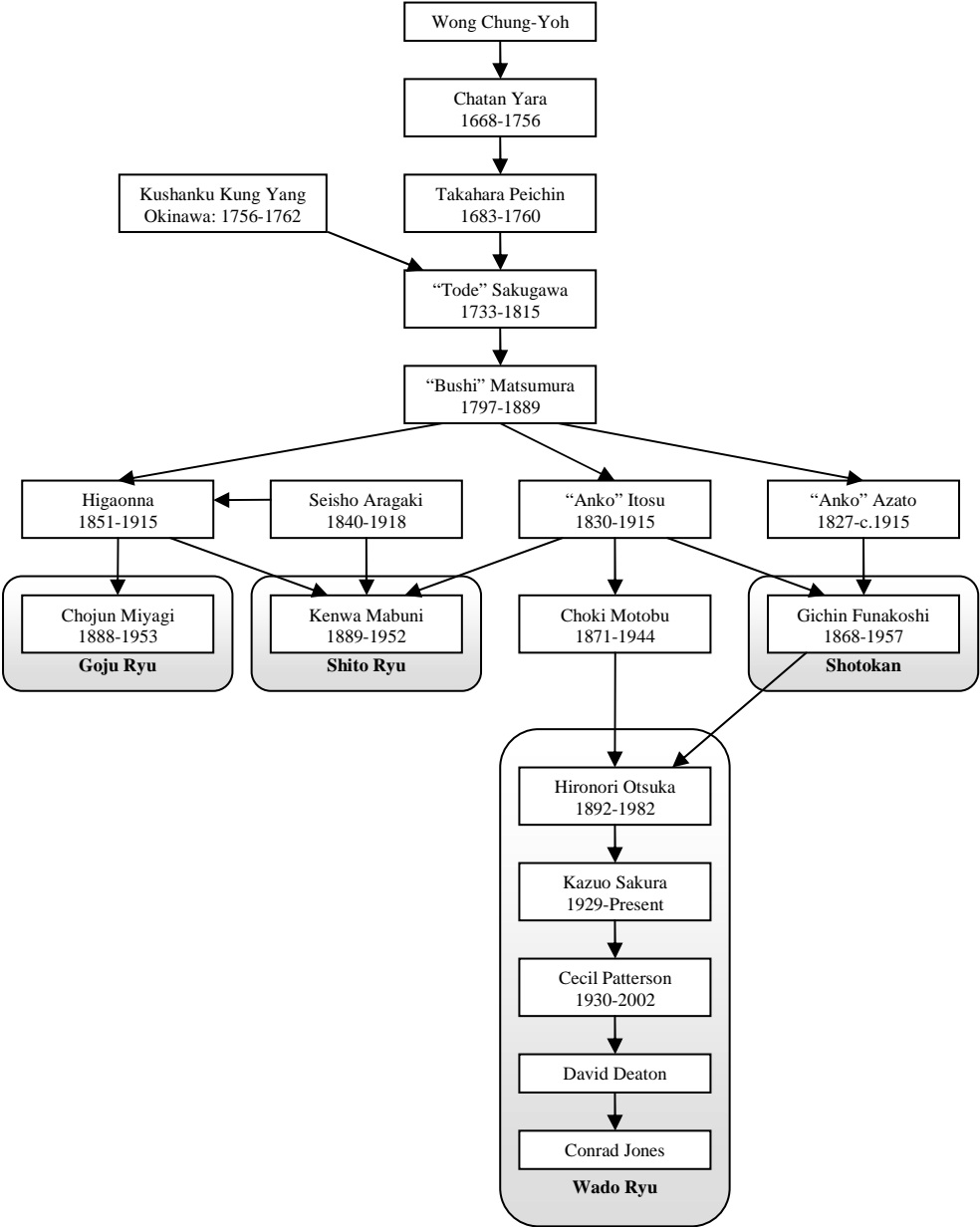
Choki focused on efficiency and effectiveness in techniques and in each and every movement. Although Motobu did not establish a new style (“ryu”), he tremendously influenced Karate.

Among Choki Motobu’s teachers were: Anko Itosu (Shuri-te), Kasoku Matsumora (Tomari-te), Kanagusuku, and Sakuma of Gibo.

Among his students were: Yasuhiro Konishi (founder of Shindo Jinen Ryu), Kose Kuniba (founder of Seishin Kai), and Hironori Otsuka (founder of Wado Ryu).

### Lineage Diagram

The following diagram shows the lineage progression for all of the main Karateka mentioned above. I’ve also extended it beyond the Okinawan masters to include our school’s lineage all the way down to Mr. Jones. Overall, this diagram covers more than a 300 year period in the development of Karate.



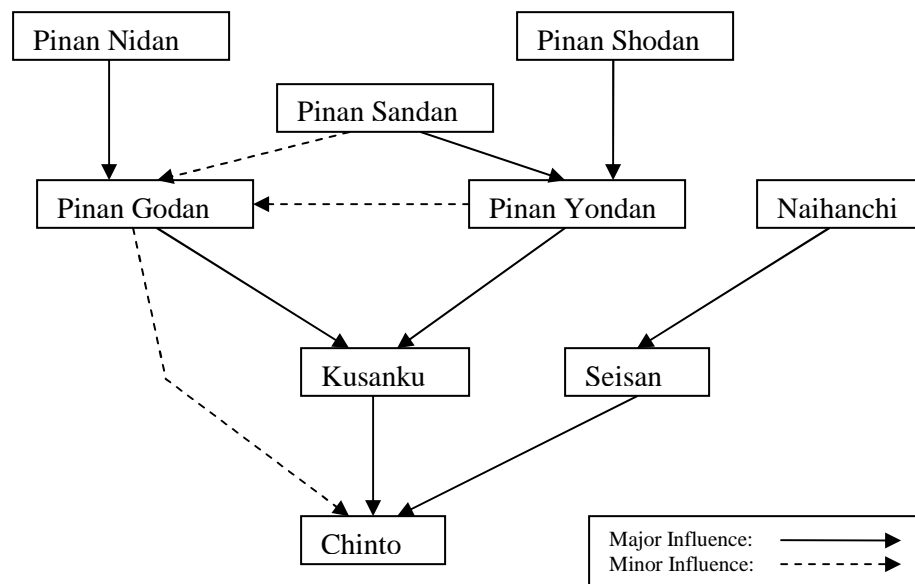
## 2. WADO RYU KATAS

“Simply, to master kata, one must practice and practice.” – Hironori Otsuka

### Otsuka’s Nine Core Katas

Hironori Otsuka only detailed nine katas in his book *Wado Ryu Karate*. Otsuka Sensei “only incorporates these nine in his movements”, commenting that “some falsely believe that mastery and progress comes by knowing as many kata as possible. One must remember that it is quality over quantity when practicing any kata.”

According to Shingo Ohgami the technical development of the core Wado katas is:



The Pinan katas are summarized into Kusanku. Then together with the other series of Naihanchi and Seisan, Kusanku develops further into Chinto. Otsuka Sensei said, “If Chinto can be grasped fully, it should be the end. All other kata become the stepping stones to obtaining Chinto.”

### Pinan Katas

The Pinan katas were made or rearranged from the Chan-nan kata by Yasutsune “Anko” (“Iron Horse”) Itosu (1830-1915) near the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Chan-nan kata were much older training forms that had their origins in China. Some also say that Itosu derived the Pinan katas from the Kusanku kata, but it’s possible that the Kusanku kata was derived from the Chan-nan forms too. Either way, the Pinan katas are not that old, but they are widely trained by Shuri-te stylists.

In his book, Otsuka Sensei says that a Karate expert named Ing Shu Ho originated the Pinan katas, but I haven’t seen that corroborated by anyone else. Otsuka also mentions that the Chan-nan kata may be the origin, and he says he doesn’t know for sure.

## Pinan Shodan

This kata was called *Heian Nidan* by Funakoshi. It introduces kicking techniques, as well as open-handed blocking techniques. Its theme is based on blocking and countering techniques used in free-style sparring.

The techniques in Pinan Shodan are mainly based on the “double moment” principle of physics. In other words, when a block goes out in one direction, the body and the other arm must twist in the opposite direction. In normal punches and other basic techniques the body is twisted in the same direction as the strike, but in “double moment” the body is twisted in the opposite direction from the strike.

## Pinan Nidan

This kata was called *Heian Shodan Variation* by Funakoshi. Even though Nidan means “Second”, it is trained as the first Pinan kata in our schools because of its similarities to First Basic Kata. Because of the more advanced techniques that are introduced in Pinan Shodan, the order of the two have been switched. Its theme, as well as First Basic Kata’s, is on balance, coordination, timing, and reflexive thinking. It also provides an introduction to body shifts (“tai sabaki”).

## Pinan Sandan

This kata was called *Heian Sandan* by Funakoshi. Its theme is based on using close-in fighting techniques.

The techniques in Pinan Sandan are mainly accelerated by body twisting in the same direction as the techniques themselves (i.e., “single moment”). Contrast this with Pinan Shodan where the body twists go in the opposite direction of the techniques (i.e., “double moment”). For example, compare the opening soto ukes in the two katas.

## Pinan Yondan

This kata was called *Heian Yondan* by Funakoshi. The theme of this kata is street fighting and jujitsu techniques.

Technically, Pinan Yondan is a summary of Pinan Shodan and Pinan Sandan, where the two different types of acceleration via body twisting are mixed (i.e., “single moment” and “double moment”).

## Pinan Godan

This kata was called *Heian Godan* by Funakoshi. The theme of this kata is defense against weapons.

Pinan Godan seems to have been influenced by Tomari-te (e.g., it includes a jump), and it will give you some preparation for the Chinto kata, which is derived from Tomari-te.

## Kusanku

This kata is a combination of the Pinan katas. It was named after a Chinese official named [Kushanku](#) who supposedly taught it to [Tode Sakugawa](#) in Shuri, Okinawa in 1762. This kata is one of the oldest that can be traced in the records, and it has more similarity to the Northern Shaolin Chinese system than other Karate katas.

It is said to be the kata that Gichin Funakoshi used when he would demonstrate the “new art of karate”. Funakoshi changed its name in Shotokan to *Kanku Dai* because of the first movement of this kata. *Kanku* means “to look to the sky”. Other names for this kata are *Kosokun*, *Kwanku*, and *Kushanku*.

In Wado Ryu we learn Kusanku Dai (*Dai* = “big”). Other styles learn additional variations including Kusanku Sho (*Sho* = “small”) and Shiho Kusanku (*Shiho* = “four directions”).

Otsuka said of Kusanku, “One must be reminded that this kata moves swiftly and in all directions. Every single movement must be correct and quickly executed. This kata places the shifting of the body as its main objective.”

One theory on the origin of this kata suggests that Tode Sakugawa did not study directly with Kushanku but rather learned the principles from [Chatan Yara](#) who was Sakugawa’s teacher’s teacher. [Sokon “Bushi” Matsumura](#) (Sakugawa’s senior student) taught only one Kusanku kata, *Yara Kusanku*. This title would seem to indicate a link with Chatan Yara.

See the section [“Kanku Dai”](#) below for information on the kata that our school refers to as *Kanku Dai*.

## Naihanchi

The “iron horse” or “battlefield” kata. It is called *Tekki Shodan* by Shotokan karateka. According to his book, *Wado Ryu Karate*, Otsuka Sensei learned this kata from renowned Naha-te fighter [Choki Motobu](#) and personally favored Naihanchi over all other kata. Its origins are from pre-1825 [Matsumura](#) to Shuri/Tomari.

The Naihanchi series has Shodan, Nidan, and Sandan variations, and many Karate styles practice all three. In Wado Ryu we only practice Naihanchi Shodan because Otsuka described the Nidan and Sandan variations as “almost useless”. All of the Naihanchi variations move side-to-side, and the Shodan variation is against five attackers.

The Naihanchi series is taken directly from the long form called Hua-Chuan which is one of the main training forms of Tiger Style Northern Shaolin Wu-Shu. It was on Okinawa that the kata was split into three separate, shorter katas.

Funakoshi’s name *Tekki* means “Horse Riding”, and it refers to the distinctive horseback riding-style stance used throughout this kata. The Naihanchi-dachi stance is the main training stance of Northern Shaolin Tiger Style Wu-Shu.

## Seisan

Seisan (renamed *Hangetsu* by Gichin Funakoshi) is unique in that most of the Wado Kata reflect the Shuri-te influence that Otsuka was taught by Gichin Funakoshi. Seisan, however, along with Suparinpei, shows its undeniable Naha-te roots with its slow, rhythmical movements and its focus on muscle control and internal breathing (“*ibuki*”). Its origin is Chinese, and it has been traced back to the ancient Pangia-Noon style (c. 1700 Fukien). Seisan is also called the “The Half-Moon” or “13 Hands” kata.

In forward movements in this kata, one characteristically describes semi-circles with the hands and feet, and the Funakoshi name *Hangetsu* (“Half Moon”) is derived from this.

This is a Wutang kata that came to us through Master Itosu's training in Naha-te from Master Higaonna. Its original Chinese name is unknown, but in Okinawa it was named Seisan after the third Chinese Zen patriarch.

## Chinto

The kata is themed "Crane on a Rock" because of its introduction of the one-legged *sagi ashi dachi* stance. It is also called *Gankaku* by Shotokan karateka. Otsuka Sensei, in commenting about Chinto, says in his book, *Wado Ryu Karate*, "If Chinto can be grasped fully, it should be the end. All other kata become the stepping stones to obtaining Chinto."

Its origins are traced to a sailor that came from China to Shuri, Okinawa. It was taught by Master Ching-To, attaché to Okinawa from the Ming court in 1732, and so the Okinawans named it "Chinto" in his honor. This kata is another White Crane form.

## Other Wado Katas

### First Basic Kata

This kata was created by Gichin Funakoshi and was originally called *Taikyoku Shodan*. This kata is used as the first kata for purposes of training beginners and is taught prior to the Pinan series. Interestingly, it is found in the Shotokan Heian (Pinan) kata list as Heian Shodan. Its theme is based on balance, coordination, timing, and reflexive thinking.

*Taikyoku* is a Japanese philosophical term denoting the macrocosm before its differentiation into heaven and earth; hence, it means chaos or the void. Funakoshi said of this kata, "As its name implies, this form is of the most profound character and one to which, upon mastery of the art of Karate, an expert will return to select it as the ultimate training kata."

### Jutte

This kata is themed "10 Hands", and the name implies that one who has mastered this kata is as effective as ten men. Funakoshi Sensei called it *Jutte*, and its origins are from Shuri-te.

This is a classic Shaolin kata, and it is often trained with Jion and Jiin.

### Jion

This kata is a Chinese Buddhist temple kata from the Jion-ji Shaolin Temple. Funakoshi Sensei called it *Jion*, and its origins are from Shuri-te. In Okinawan, "Jion" means "temple ground".

This is the classic "mainstream" Shaolin kata, complete with the "Ming" salute at the beginning (left shooto pressed against right fist). Shaolin is also known as Jion-Ji to the Japanese, but the literal translation of the kanji is "to love the sound" (of Shaolin).

### Passai

This kata is called "Storming the Fortress", and this is evident from the power and strength that is demonstrated in the kata. Its name was changed to *Bassai Dai* by Gichin Funakoshi. Its origins are from pre-1869 [Matsumura](#), Shuri-te style.

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.

In other Karate styles, Passai has long and short forms (Passai Dai and Passai Sho respectively). These kata are from Northern Shaolin sources but from which sub-style no one is sure. They do, however, have strong Tiger Style characteristics.

It is said that Passai Dai symbolizes the capture of the fortress, and Passai Sho symbolizes the fight to get out again.

## Neseishi

The "24 steps" kata. This was called *Nijushiho* by Funakoshi Sensei, and it was first taught by [Seisho Aragaki](#). This kata is thought to have its origins in one of the Dragon sub-styles. It is taken from a long form called "Kaisan".

## Rohai

This kata is called "The Mirror of the Soul" or "White Heron". In Okinawan the name "Rohai" means "vision of the white crane". This kata was called *Meikyo* by Funakoshi Sensei, and it is a Tomari-te style kata. It was taught by [Matsumura](#), but it originated much earlier.

This is a very mysterious kata. It seems that the Japanese knew it long before Master Funakoshi introduced Okinawan Karate into Japan. There is even a Japanese legend concerning Ameratsu, the Sun Goddess, that involves this kata.

Ameratsu lost her mirror and could not admire herself. So she went into a sulk, and the world was covered in darkness. The other Gods decided something must be done, so they sent a great warrior to perform a "war dance" outside her cave. Hearing the noise, Ameratsu became curious and came out of the cave, restoring light to the world. The "war dance" was reputed to be Rohai.

This kata and its history are discussed in detail in chapter 13 of *Clouds In The West* by Dave Lowry.

## Wanshu

"The Flying Swallow" kata. Renamed as *Empi* in the Shotokan syllabus by Gichin Funakoshi. It was introduced in 1683 to Tomari from China.

The distinctive motion of this kata is an upper level attack, after which one grasps the opponent and draws him inward, simultaneously jumping in and attacking again. The movement resembles the up and down and flipping away flight of a swallow.

This is a classic White Crane style kata brought to Okinawa in the 17<sup>th</sup> century by military attaché Master Wang-Shu. The kata was named after him, hence its Okinawan name of "Wanshu". This translates to "excellent or incredible arms", and perhaps this explains the lovely hand techniques this kata contains. Wang-Shu was supposed to be a large man whose specialty was lifting his adversary above his head, throwing him to the ground, and then jumping on him. These movements can still be found at the end of the kata.

## Suparinpei

This kata is known as “108 hands” representing the 108 evil spirits of man. It is also said to have represented a band of 108 warriors that travelled the Chinese countryside in the 1600s performing “Robin Hood”-type tasks of doing good deeds, giving to the poor, etc. It’s also known by its Chinese name of *Pechurrin* and occasionally referred to with the Funakoshi-altered name of *Hyaku Hachi Ho*. [Higaonna](#) said that the name really means “108 Masters” as that is the number of masters it took to create it.

Created in the 1600s by Chinese General Ye Fai, this very old kata was later taught to Naha-te founder Kanryu Higaonna between 1868-1881 in Fuzhou, China (Fukien province) by Chinese Shorinji Kempo master Ryu Ryu Ku. Higaonna passed it on to Gojo-Ryu founder Chojun Miyagi and Shito Ryu founder [Kenwa Mabuni](#). Mabuni taught this kata to Hironori Otsuka.

Suparinpei was originally listed in the 1939 kata list registered by Otsuka Sensei with the Dai Nippon Budokukai as the 16th Wado kata but was dropped from the syllabus in the 1950s. Many Wado schools have revived the Wado Suparinpei, which is very similar to the Shito Ryu version, probably showing its roots coming to Otsuka from Kenwa Mabuni. Suparinpei is now listed as a Wado kata with the WKF and its Wado liason, the JKF-Wado Kai. It is presently still taught by Teruo Kono, Hachidan Germany JKF-Wado Kai and Dr. Katsumi Hakoishi, Hachidan Japan JKF-Wado Kai as well as some other various places.

## Unsu

Unsu is from Tomari-te, and it means “Defense of a Cloud” or “Cloud Hand”. The name used on Okinawa is “Unshou”, and it means that even if your enemies surround you like a cloud, you will surely defeat them if you master Unsu.

Unsu was never included in the Wado kata syllabus by Otsuka Sensei; however, it is recorded that Otsuka at one time knew as many as 30 kata. As per his writings, quality was desired over quantity, and Otsuka felt that nine kata were enough to express the essence of Wado Ryu, with Chinto being the pinnacle of the Wado kata. For a time, the JKF-Wado Kai introduced a Wado Unsu for WKF competition, but they removed it as of 2001-2002.

This is another Dragon Style kata from Aragaki (like Neseishi and Sochin).

## “Kanku Dai”

At our school, high level black belts learn a kata called *Kanku Dai* that isn’t the same as the Shotokan kata of the same name (i.e., Kusanku). Our Kanku Dai is a kata that David Deaton made up for demos, and he applied the name Kanku Dai to it. Mr. Jones learned this kata when he was an instructor at David Deaton’s school in the 1980s.

## Ryu Sei

The Ryu Sei kata was created by Tatsuo Suzuki, and its theme is “honor and rescue”. The story behind this kata’s theme is as follows: A young warrior traveling the countryside sees a beautiful woman being harassed by several men. The young warrior’s sense of honor requires him to engage the men in combat to rescue the maiden.

In the Ryu Sei kata, Suzuki uses many sequences from other Wado katas such as Seisan, Kusanku, Passai, and Wanshu. The kata’s pacing goes from slow and rhythmic to fast and

agile, which shows both its Naha-te and Shuri-te influences. The end of this kata features a “Tamashiwara” (board or brick breaking) technique, which is quite unique in a kata.

### 3. OTHER KATAS

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There are many other katas practiced by the various styles of Karate. For example, some schools of Shito Ryu claim to teach up to 70 katas. The origins and details of many katas are lost or unknown; sometimes only a name is still known. For completeness, I've listed all the ones I've heard of here along with any available details.

#### Karate Katas

Most of these details were gathered from various sites on the Internet.

- **Chinte** – This kata is one of the older ones, and its salute at the beginning betrays its Wutang origin. The name translates to “to restore calm” or “to establish peace”. The final moves of this kata are supposed to represent the ocean waves disappearing into the dry sand on the beach just as your enemies would vanish before you if you master these techniques.
- **Gojushiho** – This kata has Dai and Sho (long and short) forms. These katas are a departure from the norm as they have their origin in a Southern Shaolin style called “Phoenix Eye”. They are taken from a long form called “Kaisan”, which is the same form that Neseishi is derived from. The name for this kata on Okinawa was originally “Useishi”, but it was later changed to Gojushiho – “the fifty-four steps”. A video of Gojushiho Sho is available at <http://www.johnstonkarate.net>.
- **Hakucho** – “The white swan”.
- **Jiin** – Another old Shaolin kata. This is a “sister kata” to Jion as they are often trained together (along with Jutte). The name translates to “love of truth”.
- **Kururunfa** – Another Naha-te kata. The name means “to come to stop or destroy”.
- **Nepai** – In Chinese it means “twenty-eight strikes”. It emphasizes grappling and the striking of anatomical vulnerable points. Nepai was first introduced to Okinawa by Genki Go when he taught it to Juhatsu Kyoda and [Kenwa Mabuni](#). To-On Ryu was the only Okinawan style that preserved and passed on Nepai. It is still practiced by several styles of Fujian White Crane kung fu.
- **Nipaipo** – “The twenty steps”. Kenwa Manbuni’s version of the Nepai kata. It is considerably different from the To-On Ryu version of Nepai, and it is still practiced by some sects of Shito Ryu.
- **Sanchin** – One of the oldest katas. It comes from the Wutang Hsing-i style. The name means “three conflicts”.
- **Sanseiru** – “The thirty-six steps”.
- **Seienchin** – This name means “to calm and suppress from afar”. A “Kingai” kata from the Naha-te school.
- **Seiryu** – “The green willow”.
- **Shinsei** – “To be born again”.
- **Sochin** – This is a Northern Shaolin Dragon Style kata originally taught on Okinawa by Master [Aragaki](#). This kata is supposed to demonstrate the power of “ki”, and the name means “to overcome using power” (of ki).
- **Tensho** – This is another Naha-te kata. The name means “heavenly hands”.
- **Wankan** – A Shaolin-based kata of unknown origin. The old name was *Wanduan*, and the name translates to “sword arm”. Using these techniques, your enemies will think your arm is a sword.

For the following katas I could only find a name and sometimes a video:

- **Annan** – Video at <http://www.johnstonkarate.net>
- **Ananku**
- **Papurem**
- **Saifa**
- **Seipai** – Video at <http://www.johnstonkarate.net>
- **Shinpa**
- **Shisochin**

## Weapons Katas

These katas aren't "empty hand" katas, so they're not technically Karate katas. But they've been practiced by many karateka, and they can often be adapted for "empty hand" training.

### Bo Katas

Katas listed as *gyaku bo* are left-handed (i.e., reverse) katas.

- **Akahachi No Kon** – Developed by Akahachi Oyakei in the 1700s. A *gyaku bo* kata.
- **Aragaki No Kon** – Developed by [Seisho Aragaki](#) around 1900.
- **Chinen Shitanaka No Kon** – Developed by Master Shitanaka Chinen in the 1900s.
- **Gekkisai** – The Shotokan *bo* kata.
- **Miyazato Bo** – Developed by Master Miyazato around 1900.
- **Sakugawa No Kon** – Developed by [Sakugawa](#) in the 1800s. Has Dai and Sho variations.
- **Shirotaru No Kon** – Developed by Chinen of Yamene Ryu in the 1900s. Known in Okinawa as *Ogusuku*. The name means "the white barrel".
- **Shoun No Kon** – Developed by Master Sueishi in Shuri around 1900.
- **Shushi No Kon** – Developed by Chinen of Yamene Ryu. Has Dai and Sho variations.
- **Sueishi No Kon** – Developed by Master Sueishi in Shuri around 1900.
- **Sueyoshi No Kon** – Developed by Master Sueyoshi in the 1900s. Sueyoshi taught it to Funakoshi.
- **Tenryu No Kon** – "Heavenly Dragon Stick".
- **Toyama No Kon** – Developed by Master Toyama in the 1900s.
- **Tsuken-Hantagawa No Kon** – Developed by Master Tsuken around 1900. Also known as *Tsuken Bo*. A *gyaku bo* kata.
- **Urazoe No Bo Kon** – Developed by Tsuken Kouruguwa.
- **Yonegawa No Kon** – Developed by Chinen of Yamene Ryu in the 1900s. A *gyaku bo* kata.

For the following katas I could only find a name:

- **Chibana No Kon**
- **Hakuson No Kon**
- **Oshiro No Kon**
- **Suezoko No Kon**
- **Sunakake No Kon**
- **Teruya No Kon**

## 4. REFERENCES

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### Web Sites

<http://www.conradjoneskarate.com/>

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<http://www.sanshin-kan.com/Teachers.htm>

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