

Sensei's Corner

Goju Ryu Kata list

Sanchin (“Three Battles”) represents mind, body, and spirit.

When you are young you practice Sanchin kata with all your strength to develop power. As you get older, your focus should shift to developing the movements of the kata into smooth, flowing techniques, as well as utilizing strength and power. After you have practiced Sanchin kata over a period of time you will be able to concentrate all of your power in the tanden (concentration is placed on tightening the muscles of the lower abdomen and preparing the spirit for combat). This accomplishment, many believe will not only help you to live a longer life, but will also help you to deal with stressful situations in a much calmer manner.

Tensho (“Rolling Palms”) created by Miyagi Sensei, which emphasizes the softness of the art, as opposed to the hardness of the Sanchin Kata. Thus the name “Goju Ryu: meaning “Hard and Soft School”.

Gekisai-Dai-Ichi and Gekisai-Dai-Ni (“Attack and Smash the Fortress I & II”) Miyagi Chojun Sensei created this kata in the mid 1930's for young students for development as he became more involved in the school system teaching Goju Ryu to the young. He needed a kata that developed young students physical education.

Saifa (“Smash and Break”) it is necessary to consider attacks from the side in order to perform this kata. The striking techniques of Saifa are circular and so performed with the joints of the arm, wrist, elbow, and shoulder, all free of tension. Only at the point of execution are the joints locked and the muscles tightened, so effectively focusing all your power at the point of impact.

Seiyunchin (“To Grab and Pull in Battle”) There is no kicking in this kata, main purpose of the kata being to develop a strong and stable stance. Without a strong stance it is impossible to develop full power in your techniques. Shiko dachi is heavily stressed. Within the kata there are numerous pulling and throwing techniques for close in fighting

Sanseru (“Thirty-six Hands”) is derived from $6 \times 6 =$ the first 6 represent eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and spirit.

The second 6 represent color, voice, taste, smell, touch, and justice.

This kata also contains four directional movements and techniques used in close combat. In real fighting it is often the case that an attack comes suddenly and without warning. Very quickly, calm turns to sudden action. Throughout the kata the moves follow this rhythm: slow, smooth movements followed by fast explosive ones. This is a purely fast and hard kata designed to develop speed and power and it is therefore not as intricate as other kata. Much more research still needs to be done on this kata to fully understand its deeper meaning and hidden techniques.

Seipai (“Eighteen Hands”) is derived from $6 \times 3 =$ the 6 represents color, voice, taste, smell, touch, and justice the same as the second 6 of Sanseru.

The 3 represent good, bad, and peace.

**Please note that this may not be the ‘exact’ theory of how Seipai was created. There are numerous different theories and this is one suggestion out of many.

The name Seipai originates is from ‘18 (Seipai) Rakan-Te’. The kata consists of 18 basic hand techniques of the 18 Rakan-Ken of Nan-Pa (Ha) Shorin-Ken. It is the 18 hands of basics from Tsuki, Keri and Uke (punch, kick and block).

Rakan is a saint whose worldly passions attain a higher perception of life. Gautama (Sakyamuni) appointed the names of 18 saints and they reached the stage of Arakan.

After Seipai, Sanseiru (36 hands) and Suparimpei (108 hands) were created. The two katas were created as a reverse, opposite and throw technique variations of Seipai. This is why the numbers of Sanseiru and Suparimpei are multiples of 18. It is interesting that in Japanese, 18-ban (read as ‘Ohako’) can mean favorite and Seipai was Sensei’s Miyagi’s favorite Kata. Seipai includes ‘Gyaku-Waza’ and ‘Nage-Waza’ with sekkin-sen (close distance fighting). Seipai has particular Goju movements called ‘En’ which means that all the movements are circular. Seipai has a variety of ‘Atemi-Waza’, ‘Gyaku-Waza’ and ‘Nage-Waza’. There is a good balance of techniques and energetic motion, and therefore it is a difficult kata to perform.

Shisochin (“Four Directions Battle”) This kata stresses four directional fighting. When performing you imagine striking and pushing away four opponents. As you strike, power is concentrated in the palm heel and tanden, and you exhale as you strike. In addition to pushing techniques, which create distance between you and your opponent, the kata also contains techniques for close in fighting such as joint locks and attacks, nukite, and hiji ate. Thus, in a real fight if you fail to distance yourself from your attacker, the close combat techniques of the kata can be used effectively.

Seisan (“Thirteen Hands”) The outstanding feature of this kata is the combination of circular and straight movement, speed with heavy powerful muchimi (sticky hands), and hard and soft technique. The circular smoothness of the blocks and the linear power of the attacks combine to create to kata of sublime aesthetic beauty. Seisan kata contains a great variety of contrasting techniques. For example, circular movements quickly change to linear moments in combination; fast and slow movements are performed with minimum of excess body motion. This kata is characterized by combinations of techniques containing fast explosive movements balanced and interspersed by slower heavy movements performed with muchimi. Each technique, seeming to be only one strike or block, may contain many meanings. For example, towards the end of the kata a mae geri is performed. It appears to be only one movement, but in fact, a combination of three techniques is involved.

Kururunfa (“To Destroy with Ancient Mantis Techniques”) This kata is very quick kata. It is characterized by very fast movements of the hands (mostly open-hand techniques), feet and hips. For this reason, and because of its perfectly balanced combination of go and ju techniques, it is a very important kata in Goju Ryu. The very essence of Goju Ryu is displayed in perfect harmony within this kata. Sabaki is a key feature in this kata. There are three main kinds: moving to the side, zigzag sabaki, and twisting of the hips. All are performed with great speed and agility. Low stances such as neko ashi dachi and long zen kutsu dachi are emphasized when moving.

Suparinpei (“108 Hands”) is derived from $36 \times 3 =$ Eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and spirit; times color, voice, taste, smell, touch, justice equals 36

Times 3, which represents Past, Present, and Future.

***108 have a special significance in Buddhism. It is believed that man has 108 evil passions, and so in Buddhist temples on December 31st, at the stroke of midnight, a bell is rung 108 times to drive away those spirits.

Another name for this kata is Pichurin. Originally in China there were three variations of Suparinpei, the Dai, Chu, Sho variations. The kata practiced today is the sho variation. Suparinpei is the most difficult kata in Goju Ryu. Higaonna Kanryo Sensei taught this kata to Miyagi Chojun Sensei as his second kata, after Miyagi Sensei had mastered Sanchin kata. The fact that he taught him Suparinpei so soon is any indication of the faith Higaonna Sensei held for Miyagi Sensei’s ability. Miyagi Sensei then took this kata, and through many years of detailed research arduous and training honed and developed his ability until his performance of the kata could be said to be truly a demonstration of pure art.

