

# Kata of the Shito-ryu Style

By: Billy Hammond

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- **Aoyagi** *A self-defense kata for women developed by Master Mabuni.*
- **Bassai-dai** *Bassai-dai is probably the most popular kata among various branches of karate. It is often used as the main test kata for Shodan (1st degree black belt). Master Sakagami of the Itosukai cites 5 different varieties in his book: "Itosu, Matsumura, Tomari, Oyadomari, and Ishimine". It is a difficult kata requiring many, many long hours of practice.*
- **Bassai-sho** *This is a unique kata in that it depicts defense against a staff (bo). It also contains a difficult turn on one leg that makes it a difficult kata to master*
- **Chinte** *Classified by Master Sakagami as being in the same series as Chinto, which stemmed from the Shuri region. This kata contains a two finger strike to the eyes.*
- **Chinto** *The Itosukai version was developed by Master Itosu from the Tomari style's version. It features many open-hand strikes and blocks and a double-flying kick.*
- **Gojushiho** *This kata was popular among the warriors in the Shuri Region. It was a favorite of Master Mabuni. According to Master Sakagami, it is a kata representative of the Shuri-te heritage of Itosu style karate.*
- **Ishimine Bassai** *This kata is very similar to the Itosu Bassai-dai, and some believe that Master Ishimine based it on the Itosu Bassai-dai.*
- **Jitte, Jiin, Jion** *Three kata from the Tomari region of Okinawa. All three begin with the left hand poised over the right fist at Adam's apple level, reminiscent of Chinese kempo. heavy use is made of the shiko-dachi stance, making these good kata for developing balance.*
- **Kusanku-dai (Kosokun-dai, Kanku-dai).** *According to Master Sakagami, who references the writings of Master Ohshima, this kata was brought to Okinawa by a military officer in 1762. It was popular in the Shuri region of Okinawa and Master Sakagami cites a number of variations in his book on kata.*
- **Kusanku-sho (Kosokun-sho)** *This version was developed by Master Itosu*
- **Matsumura Bassai** *Master Sakagami wrote that this kata was passed on from Master Tawada to Master Chibana, who held it as one of his favorites.*
- **Matsumura Seisan** *A kata of the Higashionna style from the Naha region.*
- **Matsumora Rohai** *Another kata of the Matsumora style from the Tomari region. The one-legged stance used in this kata makes it one of the more graceful katas.*
- **Naifanchin (Naihanshin) Shodan, Naifanchin Nidan, Naifanchin Sandan (Naifanshin 1-3)** *Three very fast, powerful kata in which the movement is all in a sideways direction.*

- **Niseishi** *A favorite of this author, this kata stems from the Aragaki style. It is a short kata with a feint to the eyes followed by a takedown, making it a kata which calls for interesting shifts in balance.*
- **Pinan shodan, Pinan nidan, Pinan sandan, Pinan yondan, Pinan godan (Pinan 1-5).** *These kata were developed by Master Itosu to make learning the long and difficult kata known as Kusanku-dai (also known as Kanku-dai, and Kosokun-dai) easier to learn and parts of this intricate kata are broken down into 5 parts of varying difficulty.*
- **Rohai Shodan, Rohai Nidan, Rohai Sandan** *Three graceful kata in which the Sagiashidachi stance (heron stance) where balance is taken on one leg is used (Rohai-shodan), both hands are used to simultaneously strike (Rohai- nidan. All three feature the shiko-dachi stance coupled with the open-handed kakiwake uke towards the end of the kata.*
- **Saifa** *A kata which has its roots in the kata, Gekisai. It contains many techniques for fighting at close range.*
- **Sanchin** *A basic kata of the Higashionna style, this kata's regulated breathing and concentration make it an indispensable kata for learning the basics of breathing, movement, and focus.*
- **Seienchin** *A kata from the Higashionna style. It begins with the shiko stance and slow, regulated breathing. It's changes of stance and speed make it a popular kata for demonstrations.*
- **Seipai** *Master Sakagami attributes the roots of this kata to the 18 basics of the Southern style of Shorinken. It's difficult moves make it a kata often performed in kata competitions.*
- **Seisan** *One of the shorter katas of the Naha branch of karate.*
- **Shiho Kusanku (Shiho Kosokun)** *This version was also developed by Master Itosu. Shiho means "4 directions" in Japanese and is indicative of the directions of movement in this kata. It has fewer steps than Kusanku-dai.*
- **Shisochin** *Similar to Sanchin, except that this kata makes almost exclusive use of open handed strikes.*
- **Sochin** *Another favorite kata of Master Mabuni. The changes in speed of execution make this a very interesting kata.*
- **Su-pa-rinnpei** *A very long kata from the Higashionna style, it is another popular kata performed in kata competitions due to its difficulty and length.*
- **Wankan** *A kata of the Matsumora style from the Tomari region.*
- **Wanshu** *According to Sakagami, there are two types of the kata "Wanshu": the "Matsumora version" and the "Itosu version" which Master Itosu developed from the Matsumora version, incorporating all of the major techniques found in it.*
- **Unshu** *Another kata from the Aragaki style, the one finger pokes (ippon nukite) and backkick make it a popular kata for competitions. It is a favorite of Master Fujita of Osaka.*

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