

Sanchin & Tensho Kata

Kata or (Quan or Chinese for Kata) History

In China over 1600 years ago kata was developed and practiced for the purpose of self-defence, whereas the Buddhist monks would practice kata for the purpose of strengthening the spirit as well as the body. Almost all of the Okinawan Goju kata were handed down from Higaonna Kanryo Sensei. Higaonna Sensei had studied and trained for many years under Ryu Ryuko Sensei in Fukien Province, China. The following kaishu kata were handed down by Higaonna Sensei from Ryu Ryuko Sensei: Sanchin, Saifa, Seiyunchin, Shisochin, Sanseru, Sepai, Kururunfa, Sesan, and Suparinpei. The original creators of these kata are unknown.

Kata - (Kaishu / Heishu kata)

The kata Sanchin Miyagi/San Po/Dai chi, Sanchin Higashionna/Dai ni and Tensho are of the Heishu teaching or the closed/clasped hand forms that are associated with control of tension and breath that lead in combination to the cultivation of the internal energies. All other kata are of the Kaishu teaching or the open hand.

The term closed or clasped hand teaching would indicate those teachings that are passed from master to student which are specific to that individual. In this instance we would say it is knowledge 'handed' on from one generation to another.

The open (empty) hand teaching would therefore be the general teachings and openly available knowledge but were not necessarily those which a student needed given his specific temperament and abilities.

This being the underlying concept of the Heishu and Kaishu kata then this would indicate that the closed hand forms contain the teachings that are specifically relevant to our journey to master and realize ourselves.

Sanchin and Tensho are mainly concerned with the development of Breath or Prana energy commonly called breathing therapy exercises. Sanchin is the first and most commonly practices first followed by Tensho to create the balance needed between the two. Tensho is the more advanced breathing exercise.

1. Ujjayi is often called the "sounding" breath or "ocean sounding" breath, and somewhat irreverently as the "Darth Vader" breath. It involves constricting the back of the throat while breathing to create an "ah" sound -- thus the various "sounding" names. This is the breathing we incorporate into Tensho Kata.

2. Dirgha Pranayama Known as the "complete" or "three-part" breath, **Dirgha Pranayama** teaches how to fill the three chambers of the lungs, beginning with the lower lungs, then moving up through the thoracic region and into the clavicular region. This is the breathing we incorporate into Sanchin Kata in Goju.

3. Nadi Shodhana, or the sweet breath, is simple form of alternate nostril breathing suitable for beginning and advanced students. Nadi means channel and refers to the energy pathways through which prana flows. Shodhana means cleansing -- so Nadi Shodhana means channel cleaning

Sanchin - Three Battles (Miyagi Chojun version)

The kata three battles - Sanchin(or its older form, Paipuren) - are of the mind, the body and the spirit. In Goju , "go" mean hard as in sanchin kata. Combined in Sanchin kata, we find peace of mind, body and spirit only if worked properly and under proper instruction. Sanchin did not take on combative elements until it was adopted by Shaolin recluses much later in history.

To amplify the kata Sanchin, it should be noted that there are, in fact, two forms used in Okinawan Goju. The original open hand version was brought from China by Higaonna Kanryo Sensei and is the most important kata in Goju Karate called Happoren.. The second version was developed by Miyagi Chojun Sensei Higaonna's most senior student and developed a variation of the original version with closed fists. The version All Stars teach is that of the closed fist. Move feet first then hands on breathing in or out. The 4 second breathing, both 4 seconds inhalation and 4 seconds exhalation done , are slower as are the individual movements within the kata.

There are four basic types of sanchin ibuki (breathing):

1. Inhale quickly and exhale quickly;
2. Inhale quickly and exhale slowly until completely done;
3. Inhale slowly and completely, then exhale slowly and completely;
4. Inhale slowly and completely, then exhale quickly

The sanchin kata of Miyagi Chojun Sensei, utilizes the breathing method of number 3 which uses the slow and complete inhalation and exhalation. Higaonna Kanryo Sensei's sanchin ibuki could be classed as number 1, where one would inhale and exhale quickly and sharply.

Info above on Sanchin breathing courtesy of the Buddy Govenders South African Goju Ryu web site <http://www.eastcoast.co.za/buddy/index.htm>.

In short, Sanchin teaches one about the summation of total joint forces: how to bring everything together at one time to unleash great amounts of power. It is also a way in which to keep the body electrically charged and physically in tune. Done correctly, using diaphragm breathing technique similar to Hatha Yoga, it should not cause undue strain, rather it should massage one's inner organs and invigorate the body. The purpose of Sanchin is not "spiritual development" but to prepare the body to absorb strikes without pain or damage (this was known as "iron shirt") and develop the forearms to absorb shocks ("iron bridges").

Breath Control

Many of the specific instructions associated with Sanchin kata relate directly to Shoshyuten Kiko. In Shoshyuten Kiko the ki or vital energy is circulated through the two primary meridians of the body (Tokumyaku-kei the Governor Vessel and Ninmyaku-kei the Conception Vessel). In Sanchin kata the ki is circulated in coordination with the breath and small movements of the internal musculature and sacrum. In detail this is how the breath is produced

Inhalation

As you inhale you envision the ki/breath descending down the center line (Ninmyaku-kei) of the body towards the Tanden area. As you do this the abdomen will expand very slightly. This motion should be very small and scarcely visible to the naked eye. This slight expansion of the abdomen helps to draw ki to the lower abdomen. As you are reaching the upper limit of your inhalation the pelvis rotates very slightly back. Again this motion should be very small and scarcely visible to the naked eye. At the same time you do this you visualize the ki circling from the Tanden down under the body and then up to the base of the spine. This is the end point of the inhalation phase. The slight outward/backward motion of the pelvis helps to lead the ki from the tanden to lower areas (in this case towards the spine).

Exhalation

As you exhale, you lead the ki up Tokumyaku-kei. As you do this your abdomen will move slightly inward (again this motion is very small). This inward motion aids in leading the ki to the back. You also lightly lift the urogenital diaphragm (lift the anus) and pull up on (rotate it tightly forward) the pelvis as you exhale. These actions both help to force the ki gently up the back (in this case via Tokumyaku-kei). Towards the end of the exhalation the ki is lead up around the head to the nose and then the tongue. At this point you have completed one cycle of the Shoshyuten. Note that the beginning of the next cycle begins where the last stopped (i.e., just under the tongue). This type of breathing can be used in all of the "long breaths" of the kata. There are a number of "short breaths." During the "short breaths" the cycle does not need to be precisely visualized but rather one should simply feel a sense of "movement" along both Ninmyaku-kei and Tokumyaku-kei.

Daishyuten

A more advanced stage of Sanchin training involve leading the ki through the entire body. This training is called Daishyuten kiko. Daishyuten kiko is really just an expansion on the Shoshyuten training outlined above. In Daishyuten kiko the ki is still circulated through the entire paths of both of the primary meridians. Thus the anal lift, pelvis rotation, spinal alignment, and tongue position still are used and serve the same purpose. The main difference between the Shoshyuten and Daishyuten methods is that the ki is also circulated through the limbs in the Daishyuten method.

3 Muscle Contractions (lock or seals in Sanchin)

1. *Mula bandha* is the anal lock
2. *Uddiyana bandha* is the lower abdominal lock
3. *Jalandhara bandha* is the "throat lock"

An important component of the breathing system is *mula* and *uddiyana bandha*. *Bandha* means "lock" or "seal". The purpose of *bandha* is to unlock *pranic* energy and direct it into the 72,000 *nadi* [energy channels] of the subtle body. *Mula bandha* is the anal lock, and *uddiyana bandha* is the lower abdominal lock ("Ashtanga Yoga"). Both *bandhas* "seal in energy, give lightness, strength and health to the body, and help to build a strong internal fire" ("Ashtanga Yoga"). *Mula bandha* operates at the root of the body to seal in *prana* internally for *uddiyana bandha* to direct the *prana* upwards through the *nadis*. *Jalandhara bandha* is the "throat lock", which "occurs spontaneously in a subtle form in many asanas due to the *dristi* ("gaze point"), or head position". "This lock prevents pranic energy [from] escaping and stops any build-up of pressure in the head when holding the breath". Without *bandha* control, "breathing will not be correct, and the *asanas* will give no benefit" ("Ashtanga Yoga"). When *mula bandha* is perfect, mind control is automatic.

Instruction in *pranayama* can begin after one has learned the *asanas* well and can practice them with ease. "*Pranayama* means taking in the subtle power of the vital wind through *rechaka* [exhalation], *puraka* [inhalation], and *kumbhaka* [breath retention]. Only these *kriyas*, practiced in conjunction with the three *bandhas* [muscle contractions, or locks] and in accordance with the rules, can be called *pranayama*". The three *bandhas* are "*mula bandha*, *uddiyana bandha*, and *jalandhara bandha*, and they should be performed while practicing *asana* and the like". "When *mula bandha* is perfect, mind control is automatic" ("Ashtanga Yoga"). "In this way did Patanjali start Yoga. By using *mulabandha* and by controlling the mind, he gradually gained knowledge of Yoga".

Breathing / Sanchin

Some of the benefits include:

- a.. Lower blood pressure
- b.. Greater Blood Volume
- c.. More hemoglobin
- d.. Stronger tendons and ligaments
- e.. Better internal heat regulation
- f.. Thicker Cartilage
- g.. Larger Muscles
- h.. Less Body Fat
- i.. Denser Bones
- j.. More Efficient Lungs
- k.. Heart pumps more blood
- l.. More oxygen extracted from the blood
- m.. More Capillaries
- n.. Lower Heart Rate

External Hard – Yang Chi Kung **Iron Shirt, Palm, Fist, Arm Training**

The intensity of loading should be increased smoothly and step by step, excessive efforts do not lead to success.

During external practices the secret of success lies in constant observance of the principle "**Toil and Persistency**". All the men who reached the top in the Shaolin practices got their high abilities in **hard toil** and reached successes only after a lot of **regular exercises**. One must rely only on his diligence. If you are not persistent in your heart, you will abandon your training half a way and loose what you have obtained during your practice.

Iron Shirt

Iron Shirt Qi Gong was introduced to the Shaolin monks by Budhidharma around 540 AD. These classics were tabulated as "bone marrow washing" and "muscle and tendon change classic". During the mid 17th century, the 5 Elders of the Shaolin temple were foremost in the development of Iron Shirt training and Iron Palm . Each of the 5 elders were expert in one particular aspect of Hard Qi Gong.

Abbot Jee Shin was a Qi Gong Master who was said to have an 'Iron Head'.

Bak Mei was a Qi Gong Master who was said to have an 'Iron Body'.

Ng Mui, the Abbess and Dim Mak Qi Gong Master, was said to have an 'Iron Palm '.

Fong Sai Yuk was an infamous swordsman and Master in emanating Chi.

Miu Hin was a Qi Gong master in emanating Chi power.

Iron Shirt Qi Gong develops a very, very strong body making it impervious to physical attacks. Iron Shirt strengthens the muscles, tendons, bones, nerves, cells and washes bone marrow (San chin). As we get older, our bodies, muscles and tendons degenerate and we become frail and have less energy. Qi Gong training reverses this Yin process and turns the body Yang helping us live for a long time and be free from sickness and disease.

Before a practitioner is ready for Iron Shirt training, he must have had at least 2 years of Qi Gong practice to strengthen and clean his or her body. Iron Shirt Qi Gong adopts concentrated Chi or energy (essence) into the body and directs it to specific organs or certain parts of the body to strengthen them. Kung Fu training will develop a confident psychology and strong body. Therefore, when an individual uses this knowledge in conjunction with Iron Shirt and Iron Palm , he or she will have control over his manner and emotions to help people.

Qi Gong practice will teach the person to relax the body muscles and tendons, clean the body of toxins, clear blockages and strengthen the organs and psychology. In doing so, one also strengthens his Chi power, in his Tan Tien. As a balance to our hard training (Yang), we also incorporate Yin Qi Gong and breathing exercises to keep the body happy and free from tension and stress. These practices maintain a proper balance of Yin and Yang so the body does not heat up (excessive Yang), after training.

Regulating Kan and Lii (water and fire) of the body is essential to keep a student's Yin and Yang energies in balance.

BE WARNED!!!!!!

Iron Shirt Qi Gong training is 100% Yang. Receiving training from unqualified people or acquiring the knowledge from books will be extremely detrimental to your health and body.

To get the most benefit from Qi Gong one must have a good heart and be relaxed. Understanding the above theory is imperative for a balanced and productive experience.

WARNING:

1: Do not learn or practice Hard Qi Gong from books.

2: Beware of people wanting to teach Hard Qi Gong. Always check an individual's "credentials".

3: Make sure you understand the idea of regulating Kan and Lii.

NB: If you start practicing and you feel that you are becoming sick, tired, lethargic and excessively sore, PLEASE STOP AND ASK YOUR TEACHER FOR GUIDANCE.

Testing exercises

Iron Palm.

INSTRUCTION :

WARNING! This training corresponds to soft trauma to the hands, over a long period of time - NOT SEVERE TRAUMA!

- Stand with toes together heels apart, hands by sides. Relax and center yourself, with natural and reverse tan tien breathing. 3 to 5 min.
- Open the toes, then, open the heels into a horse stance. Pull the fists back to the sides of the body, parallel to the floor. This will massage Kidney 1 point, on the soles of your feet, as you open your stance.

This is the ready position, begin with the left hand.

- Palm strike down onto sand bag, with the open palm. Let the palm drop softly onto sand bag. Left palm first.
- Turn the hand over and strike the table with the back of the hand.
- Palm strike to the right.
- Strike the left bag with the blade of the left hand.
- Palm strike forward at chest height
- Using both hands palm strike onto the table, with the open palms.
- Turn the hands over slap the backs of the hands on the table.
- Double palm strike to the front.
- Raise the arms above the head breathing in to Tan Tien, bring them down in front of the body as you breathe out thinking of Tan tien, leaving hands at the side of your body.

Repeat 6 times on one side.

SHAOLIN IRON PALM TRAINING TONIC

It is imperative that we purchase a special training tonic, to prevent arthritis and decalcification of the bones, later in life. Dit Da Jow tonic reduces pain and swelling in muscles, tendons and bones, dissipates blood stagnation and promotes new blood and chi to flood the area of concern.

AFTER WE HAVE TRAINED BOTH PALMS FOR 10 MINUTES, WE MUST SOAK OUR PALMS IN A TEPID SOLUTION OF MEDICINE.

IRON PALM TRAINING MUST CONTINUE FOR 1 HOUR, EVERY DAY FOR AT LEAST 6 MONTHS.

Iron Legs/shins

Muay Thai shin conditioning and thigh conditioning.

Forearms

Tegumi drill no. 3

Fingers

Driving hands into buckets of sand

Hands

- Makawara training for palm heels, knife, ridge hand strikes, elbows , hammer strikes
- Pounding sand bags with chicken head, palm heels

Shoulder

Shoulder bumps, on each other

Lats

Round house kicks

Tensho or Rokkisho - Rotating Palms or 6 hands

It is said in history that the ancient master Bodhidharma was one day observing the force of nature. The winds were so strong that a bird flying north could no longer withstand the buffeting of this head on storm. From the incredible force applied by the bird combating the winds to suddenly switching to a relaxed state of going with the flow, the bird developed incredible speed. So much so that as the bird passed the masters house the feathers at the tip of its wings shattered the corner tiles of the roof, thus the Three Battles form (Yang) and Rotating Palms (Yin), gave birth to the first two forms of the martial arts. (Some say this story even gave birth to the karate man and his practise of breaking tiles with the open hand).

Rotating Palms is practised with the story of the bird being mindful of fluidity and circular movements accompanied by a relaxed state of inward breathing. Although the principles of both forms 2 and 3 are opposite, the integration of both, explains the esoterics of all martial arts systems.

Tensho is a relatively new kata and was created by Miyagi Chojun Sensei.

Goju-Ryu kata are Kaishu, meaning open hand, and Heishu, meaning closed hand. Tensho is classified as a HEISHU KATA. Heishu basically means closed hand. This DOES NOT refer that the kata is done with closed hands. Heishu means end, closed, finished, or, the last form to be done. It means that you end your training with this kata. The HEISHU form for Goju-Ryu is Tensho. The name "tensho" literally means "rotating palms" and is also known as "rokkisho" from chinese white crane style.

Rokkishu which later became the building block on Kata Tensho. With his additional martial art training Okinawa-te, Naha-te and the Chinese arts Sensei Miyagi developed a refined form of empty hand, and even today its Whooping Crane Chinese Gung Fu roots can still be seen in its forms or Kata. Rokkishu, "6 Hands of Shaolin", denotes the different hand positions that are used in pressure point striking and high level breath control found in this kata. It is a hand technique kata and within these soft hand movements tremendous power is generated. In Goju "ju" means soft as in tensho kata. Six also refers to the number of directions from a central starting position: up, down, left, right, forwards and backwards. Tensho is a higher level breathing Kata.

This kata is done entirely in tension, but entirely without tension.

The Six hands are:

1. Iron Spearhand - the cutting or chopping hand, using little finger edge of hand
2. Iron claw drilling hand - seizing technique, with individual fingers squeezing into target
3. Iron sand hand - palm/palm heel strike, includes the open back hand and wrist
4. Iron wing hand - ridge hand strike around base of index finger
5. Iron spearfingers hand - handstrike using the fingertips pressed together
6. Iron dagger hand - extended index finger.

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