



The Canadian Isshinryu Way Everything Karate & Kobudo

Isshinryu.ca

Volume 1, Issue 2
April 2005

Newsletter expands!

We are very proud to announce that the newsletter is expanding in only it's second issue.

Thanks to the tremendous support received from the readers of the first issue, we are able to expand to include two new cities, Kenora, ON and Ottawa, ON. Each of the three supporting cities will now have a page dedicated to their news and events. Hopefully this is only the start of all cities in Canada contributing.

With the newsletter expanding we are in even greater need for the support from both students and instructors. Please give some thought to writing an article.

Articles are welcome on any subject. I'll even suggest a few possible articles that people could write upon.

Article Ideas

1. Running Technique
2. Book Reviews
3. Profiles of Isshinryu Masters
4. Comparison of techniques to Goju Ryu / Shoren Ryu / Shotokan
5. Personal Stories:
 - Tournaments
 - First Karate Class
 - Testing
 - Being an Adult Student
 - Being an Young Student

These are of course just ideas. We are here to support anyone writing an article and would be happy to help with research or ideas. Just let us know. Now, not everyone will be interested in writing a full article, but

might be curious about some aspect of training or history. As such, with the next newsletter there will be a new regular item called Ask a Sensei.

All the Sensei's available to the newsletter will be employed to best answer any question asked. There is only one key item to make it work...

It's all up to you!

Ask Questions!

Send your questions to newsletter@issheinryu.ca

NOTE: The next article will be a summer edition available late June / Early July. If your class does not run in the summer, please be sure to check it out on the web.

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Second Edition of new Canadian Isshinryu Newsletter!

- Will be available every two months.
- Valuable training information
- Important historical articles
- Promotion & Tournament Results

Upcoming Events

Fundraisers:

Annual Thunder Bay Isshinryu Karate Kickathon -

As is the standard this incredibly fun event will be held at the complex this year. April 23rd. See your instructor for forms.

Seminars:

Shihan Mady—April 9th, Kenora.

Shihan Mady—May 16th,, Thunder Bay.

Peter Puma—Dim Mak 2—
Date to be determined

Isshinryu Tournaments:

AOKA World Championships
July 16th, Chicago, IL

Open Tournaments:

April 9th, Terrace Bay, ON

April 23rd, Selkirk, MB

May 20th-May 22nd

WKA Canadian Championships,
Montreal, QC

Seisan - Part 2

By Mike Fenton

Isshinryu Karate Kata Background Part 2

Understanding the history of the **Isshinryu kata** can provide the **Isshinryu Karateka** with a greater knowledge of the **kata** and the techniques it employs. The origins of a **kata** can guide us toward understanding both the application of the technique as a student and a deeper respect for the evolution of the art as an instructor.

The information within this article is a result of research done as part of a book in progress. It is to represent a comprehensive resource of data concerning the art for all **Karateka**. While every effort has been taken to ensure accuracy of the information, any corrections or additional details are welcome from one and all.

Seisan



The Technique

The purpose of Seisan in **Isshinryu** is to introduce a number of key concepts. The two most important lessons which must be learned involve dealing with multiple attackers, and the importance of our natural stances, a key aspect of **Isshinryu**.

Prior to Seisan **Kata**, the basics include only direct, defend then attack logic. During Seisan the student is introduced to the concept of additional attackers, specifically additional attackers from other angles and directions. Creating a realization of the need to be both aware of another attack and how to react can be crucial to survive in a self defense situation.

This ability to move is highly reinforced by the stances. It is not possible to properly turn in the **kata** without using the hip motions emphasized by the C-Step. These basic movements condition the practitioner to use their entire body in each movement. It is no overstatement to say that the Seisan stance is the most significant in all of **Isshinryu**. And it's use in Seisan is so important that of all the stances it is the only one common known by the kata name as opposed to it's proper name of shoenkutsu **dachi**. Further solidifying this position is Shotokan's name for Seisan of Hangetsu, Half Moon,

named for the C-Stepping movement of the stance.

Seisan is a **kata** about movement. Perfecting the stance in Seisan provides a deep understanding of the way the body should move and how to quickly change directions.

The Origin's

Seisan is a very old **kata**. While the specific time of it's develop is unknown, it is commonly believed that it's origin's lay in Southern China, in a White Crane boxing system in the Fujian province. The first recorded performance of Seisan on Okinawa was in 1867 by Aragaki Seisho (1840-1920), who performed the kata for the last Sappushi, Zhao Xin. From this we can date the kata's arrival in Okinawa to sometime before 1860.

It is important to remember that karate training at this time was done in secret, as such, accurate records were not kept and those who did train frequently would keep it a secret.

Given that Seisan had been on Okinawa the precise instructor to introduce the kata to the Isshinryu lineage is unknown. There are two possible paths on this kata's journey into Isshinryu. In order to properly see the path, we will trace it back from Shimabuku Tatsuo.

It is clearly known that Shimabuku was originally taught this kata by Kyan Chotoku. The kata is also part of Miyagi Chojun's **Gojuryu** system. Undoubtedly both of these masters influenced the Seisan included in Isshinryu, yet the kata most clearly matches the form as performed by Kyan. As stated previously the kata was widely practiced on Okinawa. Both Miyagi's instructor Higaonna Kanryo and Kyan's Matsumura "Bushi" Sokon practiced the kata in their syllabus.

Given the time frame that the kata was first demonstrated on Okinawa it is possible that a contemporary of these two men first brought the kata and taught it to them as well as others. It is however more likely that the kata had existed on the island for many years prior to this. Records exist indicating that Sakugawa Tode learned this **kata** initially and it was his influence which helped to become pervasive throughout Okinawan Karate. Unfortun-

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"It is important to remember that karate training at this time was done in secret, as such, accurate records were not kept"



Seisan - Part 2 Cont'd

By Mike Fenton

(Continued from page 2)

nately due to a lack of records, we will most likely never be able to definitively trace Seisan's history back prior to Matsumura's generation at which time the **kata** was widely practiced.

While the origins of Seisan may not be clear, its effectiveness and importance within **Isshinryu** are beyond question. I very much hope that this article has helped your personal understanding of the techniques and their origins. The next article will be the first article on Seiuchin. Again I will be begin the name, myths surrounding the **kata** and technique.

If you have corrections or comments regarding this article or any future article, please feel free to con-

tact me directly.

Mike Fenton

mike@isshinryu.ca

This article represents part of an unfinished work by Trevor Warren and Mike Fenton. Nothing would have been possible without the many resources available both on the internet and via books currently available on Okinawan Karate. Additionally, special thanks must go out to Joe Swift, his research and willingness to share was an invaluable asset.

Book Review: Zen in the Martial Arts

By Shane A. Hale

"Zen in the Martial Arts" differs from any other book I've read in the genre of martial arts. Most books dealing with martial arts topics are simply an attempt to document the movements of a kata or some self-defence movements photographically. Other books focus on relaying certain legendary fables of great Karate masters from many years ago.

"Zen in the Martial Arts" recounts real-life modern stories and examples which make the reader feel that achieving this level of Zen is within everyone's grasp. In almost every case, the stories Sensei Hyams gives are first-hand experiences and deal honestly with his own struggle to open his mind to the Zen concepts his instructors tried to teach him. The tone and writing style of this book are a refreshing change from the standard martial arts lore.

The following passage I feel is self-explanatory and sums up the difficulty encountered in trying to define the concept of Zen.

The role of Zen in the martial arts defies easy definition because Zen has no theory; it is an inner knowing for which there is no clearly stated dogma. The Zen of martial arts de-emphasizes the power of the intellect and extols that of intuitive action. Its ultimate aim is to free the individual from anger, illusion, and false passion.

As I was reading this book several passages and

stories caught my attention for various reasons. I've chosen several to discuss.

"...for the true master, karate, kung-fu, aikido, wing-chun, and all the other martial arts are essentially avenues through which they can achieve spiritual serenity, mental tranquillity, and the deepest self-confidence."

This passage is from the very first chapter of the book, where Sensei Hyams lays out his basic understanding of Zen and the important role it plays in the martial arts. It is my observation that for many students, spiritual enlightenment is a difficult and elusive concept to grasp. Sensei Hyams' book serves to simplify some of this spirituality into some very basic ideas that are much like daily affirmations.

"You must learn to live in the present...not in the future or the past. Zen teaches that life must be seized at the moment. By living in the present you are in full contact with yourself and your environment, your energy is not dissipated and is always available. In the present there are no regrets as there are in the past. By thinking of the future, you dilute the present. The time to live is now."

This common-sense statement is a lesson that one should strive to keep in mind. Often, people waste energy worrying about the future and regretting the past. I also believe this passage to reflect the Isshin-Ryu code – the time to strike is when the opportu-

"You must learn to live in the present... not in the future or the past. "

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Book Review: Zen in the Martial Arts Cont'd

By Shane A. Hale

(Continued from page 3)

nity presents itself. If one is focussed on the past or future, one can miss an opportunity in the present.

"Compare doing nothing to a pause in music. A pause is not lack of music, it is an integral part of the composition. If a conductor does not hold a pause to its full value, it is like cutting into the flesh. As Claude Debussy has said, "Music is the space between the notes". The masters of good phrasing, like good martial artists, are men who pay as much attention to pause and silence (nonaction) as to action."

Having played various musical instruments and studied music in the past, I can relate to this passage because the pauses in music are the same as the pauses in kata. They serve a purpose in their silence and non-action, because they provide juxtaposition to the sound and action.

"It's not bad to have aggressive or hostile thoughts and feelings towards others. When you acknowledge these feelings you no longer have to pretend to be that which you are not. You can learn to accept these moods. What is bad, however, is letting them dictate your nature. When you unleash your aggression or hostility on another person, it inspires aggression and hostility in return. The result then is conflict, which all true martial artists try to avoid. Anger doesn't demand action. When you act in anger, you lose self-control." [...] "How can you expect to control someone else if you cannot control yourself?"

"Control your emotion or it will control you." - Chinese Adage

While reading these two passages, particularly the first one, I found them to be quite liberating in their message that it's okay to feel angry, but it's not okay to act on that anger. Society has taught us that it is not okay to be angry. This makes for a lot of frustration and pent up feelings of guilt.

"It was only a bare foot, but I was unable to keep it from landing someplace on my body. My breath was laboured and my arms and legs felt like lead weights. Every time I moved, that foot seemed to find an opportunity to land with sufficient force to knock the breath out of me. If I were not careful, it might dislocate or even fracture my jaw. My opponent had hands, too, but it was his feet I feared."

This passage spoke to me on a personal level about fear and physical exhaustion, having experienced

very similar situations throughout my training to this point. This type of experience is common to most, if not all, karate-ka. It's comforting to know that other accomplished martial artists, such as Sensei Hyams, have been in this situation as well.

George Waite, my good friend and mentor, recalled his brown belt days in karate and how discouraged he became when he saw someone far better than he, although he considered himself good.

"When that happened," he said, "I used to go into the dojo and watch the white belts. I saw that, compared with them, I was good. But then I'd watch the black belts and become inspired all over again, seeing how much better it was possible to become. When I finally became a black belt I realized that I really knew nothing compared with my sifu, and I was discouraged until he told me how great was his master."

This has happened to me on occasion when comparing myself to other karate-ka who are stronger, faster, or more flexible than me. Yet when I compare my knowledge of karate to the junior kyu, I can see how far I have advanced over the years. It occurred to me that this is the same for everyone, even my Sensei. It is a recurring cycle that ensures a continuously evolving dojo and lifelong personal learning, as each karate-ka strives to achieve personal perfection.

"Although I stood confident and ready to respond to an attack, it was unnecessary. By apologizing for what was indeed my fault, I had defused his hostility. And by not acting aggressively, I had removed the necessity for him to prove anything by attacking me. I had "won by losing".

Ed Parker says, *"The only reason men fight is because they are insecure; one man needs to prove that he is better or stronger than another. The man who is secure within himself has no need to prove anything with force, so he can walk away from a fight with dignity and pride. He is the true martial artist - a man so strong inside that he has no need to demonstrate his power."*

The security in being confident in your martial arts training is the ability to walk away from a fight with dignity and pride in your ability. Knowing your own strength gives you tremendous confidence. I fully agree that it is better to avoid a confrontation than have to get out of one, and I personally try to avoid those situations whenever possible.

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"Control your emotion or it will control you." - Chinese Adage

Book Review: Zen in the Martial Arts Cont'd

By Shane A. Hale

(Continued from page 4)

"...it is possible to master the physical techniques of the martial arts without understanding or absorbing the spiritual and philosophical basis of the arts. On the other hand, it is also possible to apply the spiritual precepts of Zen in the martial arts without involving oneself in the arts."

This passage, though simply stated, is a concept that many karate-ka will never understand. Although it's possible to take karate classes and learn the movements and katas, it is much better if the student also incorporates the principles of Zen in their life.

By including these Zen principles in one's practice, a karate-ka will further their enlightenment in their martial art, and their life.

The themes Sensei Hyams puts forward in "Zen in the Martial Arts" very much echo those of Richard Kim in "The Classical Man":

"Zen teaches you the importance of everyday living. Zen teaches you that the greatness of life is not in artificial things nor material comforts, but in ordinary life doing ordinary things in ordinary ways, and that it is a delusion to believe there is something special because we are humans and feel superior to other forms of life. And, most important of all, Zen teaches you reality. Reality is

life, stripped of all illusion." (Tsuru Gettan, Founder of Mugei Ryu – "There is no other")

"A man of honour is a man who makes a promise and keeps his promise. A man who makes a promise he does not intend to keep or does not try to keep is a man who tarnishes his most valuable possession – his honour." (Chibana Chosin)

Iwao No Mi – Means steady as a rock. The same state of mind under all conditions not influenced by external factors.

From the above quotes it's easy to see that the martial arts are deeply rooted in Zen, Buddhism, Taoism and other Eastern religions. The influence of religion on the martial arts can be seen throughout the arts in the various Codes, Creeds, Katas, Dojo Etiquette, etc.) The commonly-heard statement that Karate should be practiced Mentally, Physically and Spiritually, is a good example of the important role one's beliefs can play in how they approach the martial arts. If a student has a negative attitude it will be apparent in their basics, katas, sparring, and dojo etiquette. If, on the other hand, a student has a strong sense of right and wrong, respect for their art, and honour there is a much higher probability this student will grow and mature as a karateka. They will ultimately take more away from their Karate training.

"A man of honour is a man who makes a promise and keeps his promise."

Black Belt Level Promotions

Each newsletter, we will attempt to recognize all Black Belt level promotions that have occurred since the previous newsletter.

Again like everything else in this newsletter, no guarantee of absolute completeness. If you know of one I missed, please let me know and I will include it for the next one.

Completed Gradings

Don't stop training now! There's always more to learn and improve upon.

Ottawa, On—Shane Hale

Februrary 4th, Shodan.

Upcoming Gradings

Good luck to everyone on their upcoming tests.

April 9th—Kenora, ON

Joe Rigato—Sandan

Dale Radford—Nidan

Donna Adams—Shodan

James Stewart—Shodan

May 15th—Thunder Bay, ON

Susan Baldassi—Godan

Janet Fuchek—Godan

Trevor Warren—Yondan

Dinah Jung—Yondan

Cody Ward—Shodan

Jeff Long—Shodan

Improve your karate– Shiko Dachi



Proper Depth of Shiko Dachi

“Shiko Dachi is the most powerful stance used in Isshinryu and applied whenever additional power is desired in the technique”

Shiko **Dachi** is the horse stance. In Okinawan karate, it ranks second amongst the most popular stances used behind only the various versions of the forward stance. Shiko **Dachi** is the most powerful stance used in Isshinryu and applied whenever additional power is desired in the technique.

In Isshinryu the application of the technique is done in the traditional okinawan way, which differs slightly from the Japanese training. On Okinawa the stance is performed with the feet pointed out in a natural direction along the lines of the legs. In the Japanese styles, the stance is performed with the feet pointed directly forward. Having the natural position allows for increased mobility and easier transitions between stances.

Technique

Rather than outline the technique, I will assume the reader is familiar with the stance. If you are not, check with your sensei.

1. **Foot Position**—The feet should be in a natural position as described above. The feet should be perpendicular to each other.

2. **Balance** – Weight should be equally distributed across both legs and both legs should be equally bent. Any unbalance will drastically reduce your power.

3. **Posture** – Back should be straight and the head upright.

4. **Depth of Stance** – The stance should be deep enough that the toes are not visible; no higher, no lower. It must not be deeper or higher than that. An overly deep stance is only for leg strengthening and provides only disadvantage during application. A shallow stance is weak and lacks the balance of a forward stance.

5. **Movement** – When moving in the Shiko **Dachi**, the head and hips should travel in a straight line without any movement horizontally or vertically.

Practice

Shiko **Dachi** can be developed easily through repeated practice. Every member at my **dojo** has spent significant time crossing the dojo in Shiko **Dachi**. Practicing outside of class can be done anytime. A good stance will not overly tax your legs and can be done anytime.

Improve your Kobudo Chudan Uke (Bo)

The middle block with the bo is a highly common block that should be used whenever appropriate. It is common when fighting with the bo to use the “safer” sweeping blocks, however, the standard **chudan uke** is however preferable as it allows for an immediate follow up with either end of the bo.

Technique

There are three keys to performing a proper **chudan uke**, these should be developed in the following order.

1. **Bo MUST be vertical.** If the bo is not perpendicular to the floor, you are at great risk of guiding the attack directly into your own hands. By meeting the attack square it allows for better control of the attacking weapon.

2. **Block must be solid.** Arm position is key to having a solid block. If it is not solid, it will both hurt your hands and open you up to a follow up attack.

- i) **Bottom arm.** Your elbow should be firmly pinned to your body.
- ii) **Top arm.** Your lower arm should be parallel to the floor. This places the hand and wrist directly behind the elbow the strongest position possible.
- iii) **Grip.** Your hands should be firmly gripping the bo pressing the palm heel into the bo.

3. **Path of the Bo.** When doing a **Chudan Uke**, in most cases you do not want to meet the bo solid.

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“Chudan Uke is preferable as it allows for an immediate followup with either end of the bo”

Improve your Kobudo Chudan Uke (Bo)

(Continued from page 6)

It will rebound the attacking weapon reducing your ability to counterattack. Try to focus on making a circular motion with the bo cushioning the attack and keeping the weapons in constant contact.

This can be practicing individual when learning by focusing on technique. However, to master it, the only way is by training with a partner. It is essential you train with someone able and willing to strike powerfully making you use good technique. The faster the strike, the harder it is to block properly.

Another important reminder is that you will only

benefit from partner training if both people are using similar weapons. Large differentials in bo size can negatively affect the technique.

Training Pattern

There is no specific pattern to the training. When developing your technique, master point 1, repeated practice is necessary. Typically this is developed at the brown-black belt level.

Follow up with point 2 during the early black ranks (Shodan-Sandan). By the Sensei level (Sandan and up) point 3 should be fully developed.



Training Tips

A great quote is that every great accomplishment in life is 10% Inspiration and 90% perspiration. That should be every

Karateka's motto.

Training, and training hard is a prerequisite for all great martial artists. No one has ever become a great fighting sitting on a couch watching TV.

No matter how busy, you are, or think you are, you must make time to train. It's all up to you how good you can be.

This newsletters focus will be the stomach. Training your abdomen is potentially one of the smartest things not only a karateka but any person could do. It will greatly improve your overall health and gives you a strong core, significantly helping to prevent injury. Rather than give a specific workout, I will explain the various muscles that should be worked out a provide sample exercises. When doing a workout, you should do at least

one exercise for each portion of the stomach and try to rotate often. The more you surprise your stomach, the better the workout.

Upper Abs

The very top of the stomach. Primarily responsible for protecting your internal organs. When you get punched, it's usually here.

Crunches (20)

Situps (20)

Lower Abs

The largest of the abs muscles. Very useful (and required) for every kick you throw and keeping your body upright. An important area to focus on!

Leg Raises (15)

Knee Lifts (15)

Obliques

Little muscles along the sides of your body just below your rights. They allow you to twist your body. Do 10 hard round kicks and you'll feel them work-

ing.

Twisting Crunches (20)

Twisting Knee Lifts (10)

Side Bends (20)

Lower Back

Muscles must work in unison. A strong stomach can actually cause problems if you are not balanced. The lower back is the complement to the stomach. Don't forget to train it equally hard.

Back Extensions (20)

When planning your workout, remember that with everything in Karate, and life, more is not better. Doing things properly, with good form, will always get you more than doing hundreds with poor form. The numbers after each exercise are to give you an idea of how many repetitions you should be doing of each exercise. If you are doing a lot more, focus on the technique.

"When planning your workout, remember that with everything in Karate, and life, more is not better."

Contributors



Editor & Author—Chitora Dojo

Mike Fenton—Thunder Bay, Ontario

Mike Fenton has been in Isshinryu karate for almost 20 years, and has been an instructor for the past 15 years. He is currently head instructor of Chitora Dojo in Thunder Bay, Ontario.



Author—Chitora Dojo

Trevor Warren—Thunder Bay, Ontario

Trevor lives in Thunder Bay with his wife Maria. He has dedicated a great deal of his time to teaching and his own training with the realization that hard work is the key to success.



Author—Toshikai Dojo

Shane Hale—Ottawa, Ontario

Shane is the first Black Belt student of Tim Leonard in Ottawa Ontario. He is also the president of the Ottawa Flying Club and the recipient of the 2004 Chief Flying Instructor's award.

Author

Requested—Anywhere in Canada

Someone willing to contribute their time to helping other Isshinryu karateka with their training or understanding.

It is important to familiarize yourself with commonly learned Japanese words. Try to memorize all the words each time and you will soon have a large “karate” vocabulary.

Karate Terms in this Newsletter

Chitora—Essence of the Tiger

Chibushi—Warrior Spirit

Chudan—Middle Level

Dachi—Stance

Dim Mak—Death Strike

Dojo—School

Geri—Kick

Gojuryu—Hard / Soft Way

Isshinryu—One Heart Way

Karate—Empty Hands

Karateka—A person who trains in karate

Kata—Prearranged training techniques

Kobudo—Ancient Martial Way

Kokoro—mind, heart, spirit

Chudan—Middle Level

Okinawa—Japanese Island where all karate began

Shimabuku Tatsuo—Okinawan Master who created Isshinryu. Extra Note: Japanese names are written Family Name, Given Name. We use this format when mentioning Okina-

wan Master out of respect for their traditions.

Sandan—3rd Level (Black Belt) Sensei Level. This rank denotes instructor level as such the title Sensei becomes the appropriate title for the individual at this rank.

Sempai—Senior Students. Typically 1st/2nd degree Black Belts and Brown Belts.

Shodan—1st Level (Black Belt)

Uchi—Strike

Uke—Hard Block



Everything in your City

Recent Promotions

None Submitted for your city

Continue training and practicing at home to improve your standings and to help ready yourself for promotion.

News

No news submitted for your city.

Contact us at lsshinryu.ca to contribute for your city.

Upcoming Events

No events available for your city.

Visit Isshinryu.ca for an archive of our newsletters and must more information about Isshinryu.

Photography by : Kyla Bass

Story Submission

Stories are welcome from anyone and everyone. They can be about anything related to the Martial Arts, a technique you think is just great; A better way to do a technique; History of a Karate Master; a tournament trick that works well; ANYTHING!

All stories are appreciated as e-mail. You can send it to your instructor to proof read and send in, or directly to me. (Mike (at) Isshinryu.ca)

You can even include pictures if it helps your article!

Dojo Directory:

Any student is welcome at anytime to visit any dojo. Before class, always introduce yourself to the Sensei of the dojo and tell them who your current Sensei is.

For a full dojo list visit www.issheinryu.ca We are getting too many to list here.

Thunder Bay Dojos

Chitora Dojo—North McIntyre Rec. Center

Mike Fenton & Trevor Warren

Chibushi Dojo—Canada Games Complex

Dean Johnson & Maegen Lavallee

Kokoro Dojo—West Thunder Comm. Center

Joe Rigato & Dale Radford

Satori Dojo—Current River Comm. Center

Dinah Jung

Toshikai Dojo—West Thunder Comm. Center

Susan Baldassi

Ottawa—Toshikai Dojo

Tim Leonard

Kenora—Lake of the Woods Dojo

Steve Davis

Quick Tips

This section is reserved for quick little tips aimed at each belt rank. Adding the skill to your training can only improve your skills as a **Karateka**.

Black Belts:

Looking with Hips—Prior to all turns, you should look. Not only with your head and eyes but more importantly with your hips. Twist the hips so that you are almost facing the direction you are turning.

Brown Belts(Ikkyu & Nikyu):

Seisan Stance—A common mistake of the lower belts is to the feet too narrow. By brown you should begin focusing on widening the stance.

Purple Belts(Sankyu):

Open Hand Techniques With all open hand techniques. Remember to always have your wrist straight and fingers together. If

your wrist is not straight your technique will not be solid.

Green Belts(Yonkyu):

Wansu—Timing is everything. As you perform the kata think. Calm, STRIKE. Do the transition as suddenly as possible.

Orange Belts(Gokyu):

Backfist—Much of the power comes from snapping back the wrist. Work on timing the backfist to flip down at the very end of the strike. You have plenty of opportunity to practice this during Seiuchin and Naihanchi.

Yellow Belts(Rokukyu):

Mae Geri (Front Snap Kick) — Focus on coming straight up with the ball of your foot. Visualize the attack coming from underneath.

Beginners & Yellow Stripe:

C Step—When stepping, take your time and careful step using inwards circular steps. Try doing it throughout the day until it becomes natural.

Kobudo

Stab (Sashi).—Focus on the path of the sai. The tip should be angled upwards until the completion of the strike.

Little Dragons:

Patience is important. Take your time and your skills improve quickly.

Samurai's:

Stance is where all power comes from. A poor stance means a poor punch.