

Koryu Program

KoryuTodi Ryusei Karate-do Todi

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After the basic and training courses in Ryusei Karatte, the final stage is the *koryu* course. The *koryu* course is composed of four stages: *Koryu san-kei* (3 kata), *Jyunishi*, *Kon* (Bo) and *Kai* (eiku), and *Okuden-I* (full mastership).

Preface

I believe that it is the responsibility of the current representatives of *Chito-ryu* (the head of the style), who inherit the *Chito-ryu* founded by Chitose Tsuyoshi (O-Sensei), to take up *koryu* course of study.

However, the current *Chito-ryu* organization still hides the old-style process, which is the second half of O-Sensei's technique system, with mysterious words such as "secret" or "holy ground," and it remains focused on the first half of the technical system. And unfortunately, to this day, I have been unable to hear any requests for information about the second half of O-Sensei's technical system from the current *Chito-ryu* representatives.

For these reasons, I, Ken Sakamoto, the son-in-law of O-Sensei, have taken the *Chito-ryu* style and technical system and established the *koryu* process under the name of *Koryu Todi Ryusei Karate-do*.

Before I begin the explanation of the *koryu* process, I will provide a explanation of *Tensho* kata.

Tensho

This kata is characterized by a circular stepping pattern that flows without stagnation, and includes small and fast movements that are kneaded by spiraling hands, guided by the consciousness of flowing water and the lines that form circles and spirals. This circular step (*enkei-hoho*) includes a square step (*shikaku-hoho*), because a square step can change to a circular step.

My opinion

As I mentioned in my report on *Kokyu no donto* (breathing in and out), the *Tensho* of *koryu Todi Ryusei Karate* is very different from the *Tensho* of other styles in terms of technical content.

The reason is, I believe it is inevitable that even a superior *kata* or technique, created by the blood and sweat of our predecessors, will inevitably change into a different form from the original *kata*, depending on the thinking and skill level of the inheritor. This can be fully understood by looking at the differences in same *kata* used in different styles. In this regard, I do not believe that I have been able to exactly reproduce the *Tensho* inherited by O-Sensei. However, even if there are differences in the expression of movement of the *kata*, I am proud to say that the essence of the technique, of "turning and rolling hands," has been firmly shown in the composition of the movements of my version of the *kata*.

I would like to emphasize that this perspective applies to all of the *koryu kata* that will be developed in the future

I Koryu three kata (Koryu san-kei)

1. Unsu

Unsu kata was taught to Chitose Sensei by Motobu Choyu Sensei of *Shuri-te*. *Unsu* is characterized by its capacity to make the viewer aware of the movement of clouds and the whispering of wind, and by how it evokes beautiful emotions and a lingering sense of freshness. It is interesting to see how an artistic representation in the *kata* captures the movement of the clouds and the whispers of the wind blowing over the mountains and valleys with *sashikomi-makite*, *setsuun*, and spiral hand.

松の根の深さ掘てるおもしろ 枝の深さ学でしゆさ 風にうちなびく若竹のごとく 技やむくむくとかるくかわし
--

This poem was composed by Motobu Sensei, and I have heard it many times from Chitose Sensei.

The meaning of the poem

Just as the depth of the roots of an old pine tree cannot be known without actually digging them out, so too the depth of a skill can only be known through repeated practice. Like a young bamboo that flutters in the wind, no matter what kind of attack your opponent launches at you, you will learn the true art of dodging and dealing with it flexibly and lightly.

My opinion

The kata we now call *Unsu* is known as one of the representative kata of *Shotokan*, created by Funakoshi Gichin Sensei. However, the movements are quite different from the kata demonstrated by O-Sensei.

Funakoshi Sensei is known as the father of Japanese karate. However, even though I know that O-Sensei supported his karate in general, I think it's strange that there are these differences in kata.

2. Seichin

Seichin is a kata with monkey movements.

Learning process

One morning during morning practice, O-Sensei taught me this *kata* while making monkey gestures. I thought I heard him call it *Seichin* at the time, but my attention was focused only on the movements of the monkey.

I named the kata *Seichin* after returning from a visit to *Songshan Shaolin Temple* (1996). For the *kanji* character for “*sai*,” I selected “*sa*” from *Tongsai* University in Shanghai and made it “*sei*.”

A moving experience is the reason for this. In China when we stayed at the university's guest house, we had the opportunity to do a martial arts exchange with the group of Professor Zhu, a master of *Sun-Style Taijiquan*. After the demonstration, they told me that “your martial arts are excellent, and you should devote yourself to them further.”

My opinion

I use the term *keii kata* (*keii* = *form and intention*), but again this does not mean that simply imitating the movements of a monkey is *keii*. I think the idea here is that we must grasp the monkey's movements with our rational mind, transfer them to our senses, compose them into a conscious form, and then perform them.

However, there is one important aspect that must not be forgotten when performing this kata. Just as there is a big difference between the movements of an elderly person and a young one, so there is between an elderly person and a young monkey. In this sense, I am now in my old age, and I have to go to the next level in performing the kata. But how will my body respond?

3. Hoen

This is a heavenly kata in which a phoenix (*hooh*) ascends into the sky with a heart that is the flame of compassion, seeking to merge with the great nature.

Learning process

I received instruction in this kata several times, but it took me quite some time to grasp the greater picture. The reason for this was that the content of the instruction changed each time, and I had heard the number "108" during practice

Notes of the time

The number 108 exists in the *Nahate – Goju-ryu* system as *Suparinpei* or *Bechurin*. I wondered if there might be a connection to Hoen. I tried to practice and study the movements of the kata, but could not find any connection. So, in the end, I created the flow of the movements with my own thinking, using my notes and memories from practice.

The creative process of combining movements that expand on the *Chintō kata* — such as the *shuto-uke*, which is reminiscent of the small flapping of a bird's wings, the sequence of *rinten* and the ups and downs of the body, the left and right *asuka*, the turning of the wings, and the changes in kicking — was a difficult one involving a continuous process of trial and error. However, *koryu's* teaching of moving with sensitivity helped, and in the process, the image of a firebird (phoenix) flashed into my mind, and the two words I had previously thought of, "flame" and "phoenix," emerged together.

Two words

When I visited *Obakusan* (the temple of Zen master Obaku) in Fuzhou City, Fujian Province, the temple master told us that kung-fu is a tiny thing compared to Buddhism. He then led us to the main hall where he demonstrated an earth-shaking Enken (flame's fist / honoo no ken).

I performed *Unsu* as a way of expressing my gratitude, but what left a deep impression on me, along with the emotion I felt at the time, was a painting of a phoenix hanging on the wall of the main hall. I was impressed because I knew that the phoenix is an imaginary bird rising from the fire's ashes, and is similar to a peacock. The phoenix is said to appear when a saint comes into the world.

This is how the name "*Hoen*," came into being, which is composed of the characters for "phoenix" and "flame."

Notes of the time

I remember that when I received instruction in this kata, I was bewildered because its content changed each time. Years later, however, I learned that if one approaches the kata with the commonsense view that $1 + 1 = 2$, one cannot understand the profundity of the techniques of *koryu kata*.

In this *kata*, the number 108 was both visible and hidden. I could not get it out of my mind and spent a lot of time seeking for a solution. It was not that I was particularly conscious of *Goju-ryu's Suparinpei* or *Bechurin*, but it was because I was curious about the number "108" that O-Sensei sometimes mentioned.

I will not go into detail here, but I will list the forms that the numbers relate to.

3 - *Sanchin*, 4 - *Shihohai*, 10 – *Tenshin* (10 coming from 10te / *Jyutte*), 13 - *Seisan*, 24 – *Niseishi*, 36 - *Sanshiru*, etc.

Some of the numbers relate to history. I believe that there may be many discoveries to be made if one is interested in researching these numbers.

For example, 36 is the number of bales used to make a *dohyo* (sumo ring), and sumo technique is included in *Sanshiru*.

Let us return again to the number 108. At first, I thought of several related terms, such as *Jyoyanokane* (the night-watch bell) and 108 vexations, *Rokkonshojo* (six root purification), but they all came with some kind of heavy associations and dark images, and in the end I could not come to a conclusion about 108. I was about to give up my number search, thinking that it had no connection to the kata.

However, in a book on spiritual philosophy, which I had started reading around the time I decided to challenge *Gungfu*, I found a passage on "mandala as a symbol of self-transcendence and integration," and I thought, this is interesting. I finally came to the conclusion that "108" might be related to mandala.

II Koryu Jyujushi

The *Koryu Jyujushi* consists of the *Jyunishi no Kata* and the *Jyunishi-ko*.

Jyunishi no Kata

This is composed of three kata. The names of the kata are chosen from the 12 techniques described in the *Tenshinsho Jigenryu*.

1. Seishin:

The video of O-Sensei's student Nakahara Sensei's demonstration (filmed by Masudome Kanji) was used as the basis for the kata's movement structure. The meaning of *Seishin* is interpreted as "sincerity," "right mind," and the "centerline."

2. Ryuki:

The movement structure is based on O-Sensei's *Wansu* kata. *Ryuki* is also called *Aiki*, which means reading the signs of the breath by combining the breath and chi

3. Suige:

The movements are based on the video of O-Sensei's demonstration recorded by the Canada Chitokai. It is a challenge to perform movements from the low posture of *Chiseigan*. This meaning of the kata is to calm the breath and mind, and enter a state of stillness.










Jyunishi-Ko













This set of techniques is a variant created by combining the *Jyuniko* and *Jyunishi* of *Chito-ryu* with the names of 12 techniques and explanations of the techniques described in *Tenshin Sho-Jigen-ryu* and the vital points of the human body. The relationship between the names of the techniques and the *Eto* (the zodiac signs) is as follows:




1. Seishin (Rat)	2. Fudo (Ox)	3. Ichimonji (Tiger)	4. Jyumonji (Hare)
5. Unryu (Dragon)	6. Jinfu (Serpent)	7. Ryuki (Horse)	8. Seigan (Sheep)
9. Tenchi (Monkey)	10. Doko (Cock)	11. ChiSeigan (Dog)	12. Suige (Boar)













Eto is associated with the Twelve Divine Generals (12-Shinsho) and the Twelve Divine Buddhas (12-Hotoke) or vital points. The following is for your knowledge and reference.

It may be interesting to practice the kata with hidden weapons such as *Gabishi* and *Suntetsu*, which are used to attack vital points.

Eto	Technique Name	12-Shinsho (★)	Buddhas (●)	vital points (●)
1 Ne Rat	Seishin (★) Bigyara (●) Sakyamuni (●) Tendo			
2 Ushi Ox	Fudo Immovable mind • Shotoro • Dainichi Nyorai • Kasumi / Ryomo			
3 Tora Tiger	Ichimonji Horizontal shuto • Shindara • Bodhisattva Fuxian • JIntyu			

<p>4</p> <p>U Hare</p>	<p>Jyumonji Cross shuto</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makora • Daiwei De Myeongwang • Kakon 			
<p>5</p> <p>Tatsu Dragon</p>	<p>Unryu Sheathe the sword</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Haira • Manju Bodhisattva • Kyokuin 			
<p>6</p> <p>Mi Serpent</p>	<p>Jinfu Drawing the sword</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indara • Jizo Bodhisattva • Ganka 			
<p>7</p> <p>Uma Horse</p>	<p>Ryuki</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Santera • Akasa • Dantyu 			

<p>8</p> <p>Hitsuji Sheep</p>	<p>Seigan Use the eyes correctly to see through the enemy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ajira • Ruyiwa Kannon • Myojyo 			
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9 Saru Monkey	Tenchi Cutting down and cutting up • Antera • Guanyin Bodhisattva • Yako			
10 Tori Cock	Doko Motion prediction • Meikira • Amitabha Buddha • Achilles' heel			
11 Inu Dog	Chiseigan The posture shown on the right • Basara • Bodhisattva • Hayauchi / Kassatsu			
12 I Boar	Suige • Kubira • Maitreya Bodhisattva • Denko			

III Kata of Kai and Bo (Kon)

1. Kanzan no Kon



This kata is created by combining O-Sensei's demonstration recorded by America's *Chito-ryu* and *Bojutsu* by Taira Shinken, the master of *Ryukyu Kobudo*, who had an exchange with O-Sensei. The name “*Kanzan*” is inspired by the scenery of the four seasons of the villages at the foot of the mountain where time flows slowly.

2. Kokonoe no Kon

This kata was created by combining the two kata *Sanshiru* (36) and *Useishi* (54). The name "*Kokonoe*" is a rewriting of the number 90, which is the sum of 36 and 54. *Kokonoe* means to overlap many times. The kata incorporates movements reminiscent of the vertical and horizontal drunken steps and the *yumitorishiki* of *sumo*, and expresses feelings of celebration and congratulation.

3. Ryusei Chinen no Kai

I heard from O-Sensei that the technique of using a paddle — which is employed in a festival to give thanks for the blessings of the sea on Kume Island — was passed down to the Chinen family. Its background and age are unknown, but I am grateful for the efforts of the ancestors of the Chinen family to pass on this example of Okinawan culture.

		
—Kanzan no kon—	—Kokonoe no kon—	—Ryusei chinen no kai—

I received instruction in the kata from O-Sensei and demonstrated it a few times at tournaments and *enbukai*. As I practiced more and more, I became interested in the unique patterns and different shapes of the *eku* (oar) used in *Okinawan kobudo*. And, I returned to the idea that this is not just a weapon, but rather a *bugu* (weapon) to be used in festivals to express gratitude for the blessings of the sea and mountains.

Later, the form that was created by incorporating the idea of Shinto ritual into the previous form and recombining it into a new movement structure that became the *Ryusei Chinen no Kai*. And the *kai no te* of *gishiki-Shihohai* (ceremonial *Shihohai*) is a kata that is a shortened version of *Ryusei Chinen no Kai*, changed to a ceremonial style.