

SAIFA KATA

Steve Wilson – 12-2017

Saifa

This kata means to Smash and Tear. It can also be written to mean Extreme or Total Destruction. Some historians believe that this kata was being practiced on Okinawa long before Miyagi Chojun Sensei was teaching it. Some historians think that he “may” have learned this kata from Choyu Motobu. However, in our lineage (Miyazato, Higaonna) the credit for the kata is given to Higaonna Kanryo and it is said that he brought it back from China. Some historians have connected this kata to Lion Boxing in China. However, there are also clearly some resemblances to White Crane in this kata. Standing on one leg “Sagiashi-dachi” or “stance of an egret”, is rare in Goju Ryu Kata but very common in White Crane.

The “purpose and fighting strategy” of this kata is to teach the practitioner to side step the opponent’s attack and to close the gap by moving in and at angles. Therefore the practitioners Oyo Bunkai should include and focus on this strategy. The ending technique Hadaka Shime is a deadly choke, it is not a simple ridge-hand (Haito Uchi) to the back as taught at the Kihon Bunkai level. When the ridge-hand is used as a strike as related to this kata, the target is the brain stem at the base of the neck. These are “very” dangerous techniques that should not be taught to beginners.

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Key Points

1. This is a flowing Ju kata, with flowing side stepping movement, whipping techniques, and unique techniques not found in any other kata, such as the Sagiashi-dachi, Tettsui Uchi, and Haito Uchi.
2. Slide step as far as you can in the first three series.
3. The Shiko Dachi stances in this kata represent “pulling” the opponent toward you, off-balancing them while you strike or apply a joint lock or strike.
4. Get to the side or behind the opponent, strike, kick, choke, and pull the opponent over backwards.
5. The hands posture in the Sagiashi-dachi represents opening the opponent up for an inside sweep of opponents leg, kicking the inside of the opponents legs, and a powerful Hiza Geri (knee).
6. The Haito Uchi can represent striking the kidneys, brain stem area, the throat, the carotid arteries; or as a rear naked choke or standing arm triangle.
7. The Tettsui Uchi can be aimed at the top of the head (soft spot), sideways to the temple, the ear, bridge of nose, or clavicle.
8. The foot sweeping techniques (Ashi Barai) before the Tettsui Uchi, teach sweeping the foot of opponent to off-balance before striking and/or to kick the inside of the knee with the heel before or while striking.