

Tensho Chronology and Details

Steve Wilson – January 2018

The chronology and details of Tensho that has been shared with me.

1. Created in 1921 by Miyagi
2. The Chinese kata Rokkishu and the deconstruction of Tora Guchi Mawashi Uke is what Miyagi Sensei used to form Tensho. In addition, the original open-hand Sanchin was another inspiration for Miyagi's to preserve open-hand techniques from the days when it was karate bujutsu, but in a safer method. Tensho is open-hand techniques that are safer than teaching people the Nukite of the original open-hand Sanchin. Tensho is also circular and emphasis redirecting, trapping, and striking multiple ways. It is very easy to change the Shotei and Shuto to Nukite. Tensho was intended to represent more of the Ju aspect.
3. The up/down and side/side techniques are from Rokkishu Kata and the rest of the kata is Tora Guchi Mawashi Uke deconstructed.
4. The "first" round of Tensho included the three Sanchin Kamae, Sanchin stepping and punching. Then the first open-hand technique was a "short" Hiki Uke that does not come back to Hiki Te. Then the long Shuto Uchi type technique all of the way back to Hiki Te follows. The reason for the short Hiki Te initially was because it is very difficult to do the first and second open-hand techniques in one long breathe.
5. Next round of Tensho included the three Sanchin Kamae, steps, and punching. Then first open-hand technique pulls all the way back to Hiki Te and is followed by the Shuto Uke technique all of the way back to Hiki Te, in one inhalation.
6. Last round of Tensho included only one step out in Sanchin then right into the open-hand techniques of the kata without the three Sanchin Kamae, Sanchin stepping, and punching as they were eliminated.

Sources: Matsumura Sensei verbally. Miyazato Ei'ichi said he first learned as described in #3 and then #4. He then shared that although they still practice with the three Sanchin steps, it wasn't necessary to do them and doing so, doesn't really represent the purpose of Tensho, as much as it does Sanchin.