

Gojushiho Sho

Gojushiho, or *Useishi* as it is known in Okinawa, is another kata accredited to Sokon Matsumura. It is uncertain whether he brought this kata back with him from his travels to China, or whether the kata was his final masterpiece, an amalgamation of all of his skill and knowledge. *Gojushiho* is translated simply as "Fifty-Four Steps," making reference to the number of steps or movements in the original kata. Anko Itosu, a student of Matsumura, is alleged to be the one who created two versions of the kata, a *Dai* (big) version and a *Sho* (small) version. Both versions are highly advanced and quite long, with *Sho* at 65 counts and *Dai* at 67 counts (*Best Karate #11* gives counts of 65 and 62, respectively). Being labeled as the smaller kata, one would expect *Gojushiho Sho* to have a smaller frame, fewer movements, and greater complexity than its counterpart *Gojushiho Dai*. To the contrary, *Gojushiho Sho* has a larger frame and is slightly less difficult to perform. In *Best Karate #11*, it is even listed as having **more** movements. It almost seems as if the names of these two kata should be reversed. It has been rumored that the names were switched decades ago for certain political considerations. In any event, according to the revised JKA count, *Gojushiho Sho* presently does, in fact, have fewer movements, and can officially be classified as the smaller version.

Unlike Itosu's other "second edition kata" (*Bassai* and *Kanku*), whereby an entirely new kata was developed using an earlier kata as a model, the two *Gojushiho* kata are most likely two different variations of the same kata. Both kata begin with *mizu-nagare-uraken-kamae*, an elegant posture demonstrating grace and resolve. Both kata rely heavily on the use of the fingers for jabbing strikes. Almost identical, these kata differ in their execution of the "trademark set." The trademark of *Gojushiho Sho* is be the *ryuun* (flowing clouds) set of movements consisting of *ryuun-no-uke*, followed by *haishu-osae-uke/shuto-gedan-barai*, and finishing with the triple *shihon-tate-nukite*. The main goal here is to perform *ryuun-no-uke* as smoothly and gracefully as possible, and to rotate the *nukite* techniques quickly and sharply. In *Gojushiho Sho*, spear-hand is the attack of choice although sword-hand techniques are also predominant.

#	Technique	Translation	Stance	Target	Notes
1	mizu-nagare-uraken-kamae (uraken-tate-mawashi-uchi)	water flowing back-fist posture (vertical back-fist strike)	zenkutsu-dachi	jodan	slow speed
2	ryoken-kakiwake-uke (tadzuna-kamae)	both fists wedge block (bridle posture)	kokutsu-dachi	chudan	slow speed
3	ryoken-kakiwake-uke (tadzuna-kamae)	both fists wedge block (bridle posture)	kokutsu-dachi	chudan	slow speed
4	tate-shuto-uke	vertical knife-hand block	zenkutsu-dachi	chudan	slow speed
5	gyaku-zuki	reverse punch	zenkutsu-dachi	chudan	
6	tsuki	punch	zenkutsu-dachi	chudan	
7	mae-geri	front kick	ashi-dachi	chudan	
8	oi-zuki	lunge punch	zenkutsu-dachi	chudan	

9	tate-shuto-uke	vertical knife-hand block	zenkutsu-dachi	chudan	slow speed
10	gyaku-zuki	reverse punch	zenkutsu-dachi	chudan	
11	tsuki	punch	zenkutsu-dachi	chudan	
12	mae-geri	front kick	ashi-dachi	chudan	
13	oi-zuki	lunge punch	zenkutsu-dachi	chudan	
14	tate-empi-uchi	vertical elbow strike	zenkutsu-dachi	jodan	
15	shuto-nagashi-uke (ryuun-no-uke)	knife-hand flowing block (flowing clouds block)	kokutsu-dachi	chudan	slow speed
16	haishu-osae-uke / shuto-gedan-uke	back-hand pressing block / knife-hand down block	kokutsu-dachi	chudan gedan	
17	shihon-tate-nukite	4-finger vertical spear-hand	zenkutsu-dachi	chudan	
18	shihon-tate-nukite	4-finger vertical spear-hand	zenkutsu-dachi	chudan	
19	shihon-tate-nukite	4-finger vertical spear-hand	zenkutsu-dachi	chudan	
20	shuto-nagashi-uke (ryuun-no-uke)	knife-hand flowing block (flowing clouds block)	kokutsu-dachi	chudan	slow speed
21	haishu-osae-uke / shuto-gedan-uke	back-hand pressing block / knife-hand down block	kokutsu-dachi	chudan gedan	
22	shihon-tate-nukite	4-finger vertical spear-hand	zenkutsu-dachi	chudan	
23	shihon-tate-nukite	4-finger vertical spear-hand	zenkutsu-dachi	chudan	
24	shihon-tate-nukite	4-finger vertical spear-hand	zenkutsu-dachi	chudan	
25	haito-uke	ridge-hand block	kiba-dachi	gedan	
26	jotai-sonomama	upper body as is	--	--	kosa-ashi slow speed
27	ryosho-bo-tsukami-uke & ryoken-koshi-kamae	palms grasping stick block & fists on hip posture	ashi-dachi kiba-dachi	chudan --	
28	haito-uke	ridge-hand block	kiba-dachi	gedan	
29	jotai-sonomama	upper body as is	--	--	kosa-ashi slow speed
30	ryosho-bo-tsukami-uke &	palms grasping stick block &	ashi-dachi kiba-dachi	chudan --	

	ryoken-koshi-kamae	fists on hip posture			
31	shuto-nagashi-uke (ryuun-no-uke)	knife-hand flowing block (flowing clouds block)	kokutsu-dachi	chudan	
32	haishu-osae-uke / shuto-gedan-uke	back-hand pressing block / knife-hand down block	kokutsu-dachi	chudan gedan	
33	shihon-tate-nukite	4-finger vertical spear- hand	zenkutsu-dachi	chudan	
34	shihon-tate-nukite	4-finger vertical spear- hand	zenkutsu-dachi	chudan	
35	shihon-tate-nukite	4-finger vertical spear- hand	zenkutsu-dachi	chudan	
36	shuto-soto-mawashi- uchi	outside knife-hand strike	zenkutsu-dachi	jodan	
37	shuto-uchi-mawashi- uchi	inside knife-hand strike	zenkutsu-dachi	jodan	slow speed
38	shuto-soto-mawashi- uchi	outside knife-hand strike	zenkutsu-dachi	jodan	
39	shuto-uchi-mawashi- uchi	inside knife-hand strike	zenkutsu-dachi	jodan	slow speed
40	uchi-uke	inside block	zenkutsu-dachi	chudan	
41	mae-geri	front kick	ashi-dachi	chudan	
42	gedan-zuki / ken-kata-ue (tsukamiyose)	downward punch / fist above shoulder (grasping-pulling)	kosa-dachi	gedan --	
43	gedan barai	down block	hizakutsu (gyaku- zenkutsu)	gedan	
44	shuto-nagashi-uke (ryuun-no-uke)	knife-hand flowing block (flowing clouds block)	kokutsu-dachi	chudan	slow speed
45	haishu-osae-uke / shuto-gedan-uke	back-hand pressing block / knife-hand down block	kokutsu-dachi	chudan gedan	
46	shihon-tate-nukite	4-finger vertical spear- hand	zenkutsu-dachi	chudan	
47	shihon-tate-nukite	4-finger vertical spear- hand	zenkutsu-dachi	chudan	
48	shihon-tate-nukite	4-finger vertical spear- hand	zenkutsu-dachi	chudan	
49	haito-uke	ridge-hand block	kiba-dachi	gedan	

50	jotai-sonomama	upper body as is	--	--	kosa-ashi slow speed
51	tate-shuto-uke & tsuki (choku-zuki)	vertical knife-hand block & punch (straight punch)	ashi-dachi kiba-dachi	chudan chudan	
52	haito-uke	ridge-hand block	kiba-dachi	gedan	
53	jotai-sonomama	upper body as is	--	--	kosa-ashi slow speed
54	tate-shuto-uke & tsuki (choku-zuki)	vertical knife-hand block & punch (straight punch)	ashi-dachi kiba-dachi	chudan chudan	
55	mizu-nagare-uraken- kamae (uraken-tate-mawashi- uchi)	water flowing back-fist posture (vertical back- fist strike)	zenkutsu-dachi	jodan	slow speed
56	kentsui-uchi-mawashi- uchi	inside hammer-fist strike	ashi-dachi kiba-dachi	chudan	
57*	oi-zuki	lunge punch	zenkutsu-dachi	chudan	
58	ryowan-heiko-zuki	both arms parallel punch	hachiji-dachi	chudan	slow speed fast variation
59	ryo-kentsui-koho- hasami-uchi	both hammer-fists rear scissors strike	hachiji-dachi	chudan	
60	ryoken-ryokoshi- kamae	both fists on both hips posture	hachiji-dachi	--	
61	ryoken-ryokoshi- kamae- sonomama	both fists on both hips posture as is	zenkutsu-dachi	--	
62	ryosho-kakiwake- kamae	both palms wedge block	neko-ashi-dachi	gedan	slow speed
63	ryote-keito-hane-age- uke	both hands chicken- head rising block	neko-ashi-dachi	chudan	slow speed
64*	ryo-seiryuto-uchi	both hands ox-jaw strike	kosa-dachi	chudan	
65	shuto-nagashi-uke (ryuun-no-uke)	knife-hand flowing block (flowing clouds block)	kokutsu-dachi	chudan	slow speed