

# Hangetsu

It is said that Sokon Matsumura learned this kata during one of his journeys to China. Like many Shotokan kata, *Hangetsu* can be found in other styles of karate as well, and with several variations. The JKA version has 41 counts. Other styles of karate tend to use the kata's original name of *Seisan* (or *Seishan*), which means "13". Some say the number 13 refers to the original number of steps of the kata, others believe it refers to the number of different techniques found in the kata. Gichin Funakoshi changed the kata's name to *Hangetsu*, meaning "Half-Moon," describing the semi-circular movements of the hands and feet during the kata's beginning sequence. Although many kata have these same circular movements (i.e. step in *zenkutsu-dachi*), the half-moon sliding motions of the feet tend to be a little larger and more pronounced when performing *hangetsu* stance. The half-moon shape is also seen at the end of the kata, with the leg and hand movements during the *uraken-uchi*, and of course, with the *mikazuki-geri*.

*Hangetsu* is a very unique kata within the Shotokan system. It is an internal kata, focusing on the cultivation and release of *ki* energy, or one's inner force. The kata's main stance, *hangetsu*, is an inner tension stance that only appears in this kata and nowhere else (hence the name of the stance). As such, it tends to be a very under-developed stance that is rarely practiced. Most of the kata's slow moves are executed with atypical tension and isometric contraction. Emphasis is on strong breathing and muscular contraction of the legs, buttocks, and abdominals. Some instructors teach the slow moves with *ibuki* breathing (hard, forceful breathing accompanied by throat contraction). However, this is not the norm for Shotokan schools and is much more common in styles like Goju-ryu. Quite simply, *Hangetsu* is meditation in motion, with the aim of developing one's *ki*. *Bunkai* involve close range fighting in which the *hangetsu* stance is used to move in between an opponent's legs (or around them) to break their balance.

#	Technique	Translation	Stance	Target	Notes
1	uchi-uke	inside block	hangetsu-dachi	chudan	slow speed
2	gyaku-zuki	reverse punch	hangetsu-dachi	chudan	slow speed
3	uchi-uke	inside block	hangetsu-dachi	chudan	slow speed
4	gyaku-zuki	reverse punch	hangetsu-dachi	chudan	slow speed
5	uchi-uke	inside block	hangetsu-dachi	chudan	slow speed
6	gyaku-zuki	reverse punch	hangetsu-dachi	chudan	slow speed
7	ryo-jishi-ippon-ken-kamae	both one-knuckle fists posture	hangetsu-dachi	--	slow speed
8	ryo-jishi-ippon-ken-morote-zuki	both one-knuckle fists double-hand punch	hangetsu-dachi	chudan	slow speed
9	kaisho-yama-kamae	hands open mountain posture	hangetsu-dachi	jodan	slow speed
10	ryosho-kakiwake-kamae	both palms wedge posture	hangetsu-dachi	gedan	slow speed

11*	uchi-uke / gedan-uke	inside block / down block	hangetsu-dachi	chudan gedan	
12	tsukami-uke (koko-uke)	grasping block (tiger-mouth block)	hangetsu-dachi	chudan	slow speed
13	uchi-uke / gedan-uke	inside block / down block	hangetsu-dachi	chudan gedan	
14	tsukami-uke (koko-uke)	grasping block (tiger-mouth block)	hangetsu-dachi	chudan	slow speed
15	uchi-uke / gedan-uke	inside block / down block	hangetsu-dachi	chudan gedan	
16	tsukami-uke (koko-uke)	grasping block (tiger-mouth block)	hangetsu-dachi	chudan	slow speed
17	uchi-uke	inside block	hangetsu-dachi	chudan	
18	gyaku-zuki	reverse punch	hangetsu-dachi	chudan	
19	tsuki (choku-zuki)	punch (straight punch)	hangetsu-dachi	chudan	
20	uchi-uke	inside block	hangetsu-dachi	chudan	yor-ashi
21	gyaku-zuki	reverse punch	hangetsu-dachi	chudan	
22	tsuki (choku-zuki)	punch (straight punch)	hangetsu-dachi	chudan	
23	uchi-uke	inside block	hangetsu-dachi	chudan	yor-ashi
24	gyaku-zuki	reverse punch	hangetsu-dachi	chudan	
25	tsuki (choku-zuki)	punch (straight punch)	hangetsu-dachi	chudan	
26	uraken-tate-mawashi- uchi	vertical backfist strike	kokutsu-dachi	--	slow speed
27	jotai-sonomama	upper body as is	--	--	slow speed kosa-ashi
28	mae-geri / ken-kata-ue	front kick / fist above shoulder	ashi-dachi	chudan --	
29	gedan-zuki	downward punch	hangetsu-dachi	gedan	
30	gyaku-zuki	reverse punch	hangetsu-dachi	chudan	
31	age-uke	rising block	hangetsu-dachi	jodan	
32	uraken-tate-mawashi- uchi	vertical backfist strike	kokutsu-dachi	--	slow speed
33	jotai-sonomama	upper body as is	--	--	slow speed

					kosa-ashi
34	mae-geri / ken-kata-ue	front kick / fist above shoulder	ashi-dachi	chudan --	
35	gedan-zuki	downward punch	hangetsu-dachi	gedan	
36	gyaku-zuki	reverse punch	hangetsu-dachi	chudan	
37	age-uke	rising block	hangetsu-dachi	jodan	
38	uraken-tate-mawashi- uchi	vertical backfist strike	kokutsu-dachi	--	slow speed
39	mikazuki-geri	crescent kick	ashi-dachi	chudan	
40*	tsuki (gyaku-zuki)	punch (reverse punch)	hangetsu-dachi	chudan	zenkutsu variation gedan variation
41	ryo-teisho-awase-uke (gassho-uke)	palm-heels combined block (joined palm block)	neko-ashi-dachi	gedan	slow speed yori-ashi