

TAIKYOKU SHODAN

Taikyoku Shodan is the first kata in the *Taikyoku* series. It is the most basic of all kata and has only 20 moves with three recurring techniques: down block, lunge punch, and front stance. Although credit is usually given to Gichin Funakoshi as the author of the *Taikyoku* kata, his son Gigo was largely responsible for their creation. *Taikyoku Shodan* post-dates *Heian Shodan*, yet it was designed to be taught before *Heian Shodan* to further simplify the teaching of kata to young students. *Taikyoku Shodan* is taught in many styles of karate. Still, many instructors do not teach this kata simply because its pattern is similar to that of *Heian Shodan*. Technically, *Taikyoku* kata are not part of the 26 kata that comprise the Shotokan style.

Taikyoku is often interpreted as meaning "First Cause" or "Basic Ultimate" to denote its basic yet important nature. *Tai* means "big" or "great," *kyoku* signifies "extreme" or "ultimate." Therefore, the kata can be translated as "Big Ultimate." Gichin Funakoshi states in his book, *Karate-Do Kyohan*, that *Taikyoku Shodan* is the ultimate training kata. *Taikyoku* is also known as an esoteric term used to describe the Void. The Void is a Buddhist doctrine teaching that life and all things are nothing more than illusions, impermanent in their nature. So too can *Taikyoku* be viewed, as a form stripped of all complexities and extravagance, leaving only karate's truest and most effective form: move, block, and punch.

#	Technique	Translation	Stance	Target	Notes
1	gedan-barai	down block	zenkutsu-dachi	gedan	
2	oi-zuki	lunge punch	zenkutsu-dachi	chudan	
3	gedan-barai	down block	zenkutsu-dachi	gedan	
4	oi-zuki	lunge punch	zenkutsu-dachi	chudan	
5	gedan-barai	down block	zenkutsu-dachi	gedan	
6	oi-zuki	lunge punch	zenkutsu-dachi	chudan	
7	oi-zuki	lunge punch	zenkutsu-dachi	chudan	
8*	oi-zuki	lunge punch	zenkutsu-dachi	chudan	
9	gedan-barai	down block	zenkutsu-dachi	gedan	
10	oi-zuki	lunge punch	zenkutsu-dachi	chudan	
11	gedan-barai	down block	zenkutsu-dachi	gedan	
12	oi-zuki	lunge punch	zenkutsu-dachi	chudan	
13	gedan-barai	down block	zenkutsu-dachi	gedan	
14	oi-zuki	lunge punch	zenkutsu-dachi	chudan	
15	oi-zuki	lunge punch	zenkutsu-dachi	chudan	
16*	oi-zuki	lunge punch	zenkutsu-dachi	chudan	
17	gedan-barai	down block	zenkutsu-dachi	gedan	
18	oi-zuki	lunge punch	zenkutsu-dachi	chudan	
19	gedan-barai	down block	zenkutsu-dachi	gedan	
20	oi-zuki	lunge punch	zenkutsu-dachi	chudan	