

WANKAN

Wankan, or "King's Crown," gets its name from the kata's first six moves, which are supposed to form the shape of a crown. When viewing this crown shape, one must appreciate that *Wankan* is the only Shotokan kata that begins diagonally. Some historians claim *Wankan* was handed down by the Okinawan royal family, thereby getting its name. As with other kata, Gichin Funakoshi tried to change its Okinawan name to a Japanese one. The names *Shofu* (Pine Wind) and *Hito* (Flying Waves) were attempted but failed. *Wankan* is one of the more recent additions to the Shotokan repertoire, possibly being imported and modified from another style (as with most of the advanced kata) by Yoshitaka Funakoshi. *Wankan* is a very short kata having only 24 counts and only 1 *kiai*, leading some karate enthusiasts to the conclusion that the kata's transition to Shotokan was never fully completed due to Yoshitaka Funakoshi's untimely death. Generally, the movements of *Wankan* do not pose too much difficulty for the practitioner. Moves four and five, although unusual, are not very taxing; in fact, they are even liberating because they are not confined by any stance. The only potentially troublesome technique occurs during #13, when turning from *zenkutsu-dachi* into *neko-ashi-dachi*. Although, on the surface, it is a simple *mawate* (turn), it is quite difficult to perform *koko-sukui/koko-tsukidashi* quickly, with balance and power. Overall, *Wankan* is a very fluid and low impact kata, having some very puzzling *bunkai*. It is not a very popular exam or tournament kata.

Wankan (along with *Jiin*) is probably one of the least practiced kata in Shotokan dojo. Why? Probably of greatest significance, *Wankan* (along with *Jiin*) was never documented in Masatoshi Nakayama's *Best Karate* series, a karateka's number one resource for Shotokan kata. If this exclusion didn't lend itself to the allusion of *Wankan's* lack of significance, at the very least, it certainly reinforced neglect of the kata. As a late addition to the compendium of JKA kata, *Wankan* simply hasn't received as much attention as its predecessors. The JKA has taken steps to increase awareness of this kata by including *Wankan* in their modernized series of books titled *Karate-Do Kata*.

#	Technique	Translation	Stance	Target	Notes
1	ryoken-kakiwake-uke (tadzuna-kamae)	both fists wedge block (bridle posture)	kokutsu-dachi	chudan	slow speed kosa variation
2	ryoken-kakiwake-uke (tadzuna-kamae)	both fists wedge block (bridle posture)	kokutsu-dachi	chudan	slow speed kosa-ashi
3	ryozenwan-hasami-uke	both forearms scissors block	ashi-dachi	jodan	
4	hasami-uke-sonomama	scissors block as is	--	jodan	ashi-ippo-mae
5	hasami-uke-sonomama	scissors block as is	--	jodan	ashi-ippo-mae
6	tate-shuto-uke	vertical knife-hand block	zenkutsu-dachi	chudan	slow speed gyaku-hanmi
7	tsuki	punch	zenkutsu-dachi	chudan	
8	gyaku-zuki	reverse punch	zenkutsu-dachi	chudan	
9	koko-sukui-uke / koko-osae (tsukidashi)	tiger-mouth scooping block / tiger-mouth press (thrust)	neko-ashi-dachi	gedan gedan	
10	tate-shuto-uke	vertical knife-hand block	zenkutsu-dachi	chudan	slow speed gyaku-hanmi

11	tsuki	punch	zenkutsu-dachi	chudan	
12	gyaku-zuki	reverse punch	zenkutsu-dachi	chudan	
13	koko-sukui-uke / koko-osae (tsukidashi)	tiger-mouth scooping block / tiger-mouth press (thrust)	neko-ashi-dachi	gedan gedan	
14	tate-shuto-uke	vertical knife-hand block	zenkutsu-dachi	chudan	slow speed gyaku-hanmi
15	tsuki	punch	zenkutsu-dachi	chudan	
16	gyaku-zuki	reverse punch	zenkutsu-dachi	chudan	
17	kentsui-uchi-mawashi-uchi	inside hammer-fist strike	kiba-dachi	chudan	
18	mae-geri	front kick	ashi-dachi	chudan	
19	oi-zuki	lunge punch	zenkutsu-dachi	chudan	
20	mae-geri	front kick	ashi-dachi	chudan	
21	oi-zuki	lunge punch	zenkutsu-dachi	chudan	
22	mae-geri	front kick	ashi-dachi	chudan	
23	oi-zuki	lunge punch	zenkutsu-dachi	chudan	
24*	ryoken-koshi-kamae & yama-zuki	both fist on hip posture mountain punch	fudo-dachi fudo-dachi	-- chudan gedan	