

Author: M. sc. Edvard Šefer, founder of Monku Jutsu, Martial art school of self-defense based on Kata forms. Senior PhD student on Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Science and Arts under mentor Prof. Dr. W. Cynarski. Secrets of martial arts hidden in technical forms (Kata) of karate.

Title: Kata form perception.

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Abstract

Most probably there are only two documents explaining Martial art of self-defense Qi Jiquang 32 verses from mid sixteen century and Bubishi from around 1.800AD. Author made both document explanation. Original name for this martial art is Tang shou and Mr. Funakoshi made explanation how he transferred this name to Karate. For author most important Tang shou teaching is Sun and the Moon hand that enables defender to redirect attacker's energy to bypass. Author explains Sun and the Moon hand on **first two actions of Jion Kata** comparing Taji Kase- Gichin Funakoshi nearly century old explanation based on strong man approach and Ian Abernathy twenty-one century explanation based on sport approach. Author for explanation use teaching from 32 verses and Bubishi.

Documents

There is no much document before Okinawans masters with Japanese roots in twenty century reveal Karate to rest of the world. All documents we have nowadays are Bubishi in several versions and Qi Jiquang 32 verses. Masters with Japanese roots just collected and copied and put on paper *Kata* forms as seen and learned from Chinese or master with Chinese roots. We have to be grateful to them for collecting this forms and preserving them from disappearing through time but the truth is that they never knew the real *Kata* forms purpose. Reason for that is clear. Japan invaded in 1608AD Okinawa and stayed there treating very badly native Okinawan population as "lower race" for centuries. Therefore it is most logical that Chinese – Okinawan master who brought this knowledge from China to Okinawa for empty hand protection from Japanese samurais did not teach conquerors secrets hidden in *Kata* forms. They just pass forms or better to say Japanese learned *Kata* forms by observing and made their own conclusions what this forms are made for. All this explanation have base in strong man approach, because observers were not educated in any knowledge necessary to understand forms as Chinese philosophy, Chinese mythology, acupuncture, or any other science necessary for *Kata* forms understanding. No matter to that we have to be grateful to those master for preserving *Kata* forms for our generation. One of the reasons have base that upper class which might have this knowledge historically round the globe mostly had negative attitude towards physical work or exercise. Because of negative attitude to any physical activity which was only for commoners real top upper class had instructors who taught them techniques where minimal effort provide most effective defense. (Just please no sweating!) They kept this knowledge strictly hidden because they did not want to lose advantage in case of attack. Anybody who studied Martial art history know that most masters from twenty century were not from upper class but mostly come out of lower or middle samurai class and did not have any chances in caste society to study science at any university before Second World War. Due to respect to their teachers after Second World War generation did not even think or dare to do any changes. Therefore most approaches to *Kata* forms have base in strong man approach and not smart man approach where smart person with smallest power and energy consumption prevail stronger and more durable person.

First Kata

First “Kata” form for which we know who put it on paper in drawings and text is general **Qi Jigunag** 32 verses wrote back in mid sixteen century. Author decoded all 32 verses. We do not know if general created techniques, learned from somebody or just collected from several masters. Only thing that we can say is that he or somebody for him is the first who put 32 verses on paper and most probably wrote verses and made drawings (he was literate). On this Drawings he explain techniques as he **wrote “for those who cannot be strong”** Author give below explanation of first verse about walking through narrow door and sixth verse on Sun and Moon hand.

The 32 forms are set like a long karate *Kata* and Chinese still perform it like *Kata*. We can say that this is perhaps the first “Karate” *Kata* for which we can ascertain the creator. **Thirty-two verses with no doubt are showing *Táng Shǒu* art of self-defense and are most probably the first and only document explaining *Táng Shǒu*.** Tang Shou was later transformed to sport named Karate. Most responsible for that change is to many accepted as a father of modern Karate Gichin Funakoshi. Funakoshi (1868-1957) is responsible for changing the name of the Martial art from “Chinese hand” to “empty hand,” as he describes nicely in his book (Funakoshi 2012 p.33-37). He switched the Japanese characters one with other that had the same pronunciation: 唐 *Kara* 手 *Te*, where *Kara* means “China” and *Te* means “hand,” with 空 *Kara* 手 *Te*, where *Kara* means “empty” and *Te* means “hand”. Japanese learned from Chinese as many other things handwriting. Funakoshi did not to know that Chinese pronounce 唐 *Tang* 手 *shou* where *Tang* means Tang dynasty (618-907 AD) and *shou* means hand. Therefore we can say that original name for *Kara te* is *Tang shou*.

As an example author provides here one of his explanations. To confuse commoner when reading there are two verses per page, showing two defense actions that have nothing in common. That’s why author marked drawings with numbers. Drawings are showing only defender. Reader should compare ancient defender 1 with fig. 4.



Fig. 1 QI JIQUANG’S first verse (Cambridge University Library)



Fig. 2, 3, 4 and 5 Verse 1. Explanation (Author)

Author used the Chinese characters translation conducted by Clifford Michael Gyves in 1993 in his Master's thesis at the University of Arizona. Gyves translation author wrote in *Times New Roman italic font*. Text written in Times New Roman Normal fonts is author's explanation.

Casually hitch up your clothes and let your body assume the Going out the Door position.

This means that you have to act as in a narrow place where you have to hold your extremities close to the body. Here we must not forget that in old times, the door was narrow and in two parts, so that it was easier to defend the house, as Sun Tzu wrote: maneuver a large mass with a small force. In old China there was a special craft science for how to build the door and *how* to control its opening and closing by lever systems. Only the nobility with soldiers could afford large doors.

Change to a lowered posture and momentarily take the Single Whip stance.

This means that you will have to move your hands in the same way as when you whip.

Respond to your opponent as if you have no courage and advance forward.

Author found this translation more suitable: Respond to your opponent as if you have no courage to advance forward.

Vacantly brighten your eyes and ready your hands for convenient opportunities.

This means that you have to focus your eyes on the point where you will place your hit. This will improve the effectiveness of your hit.

The first verse is placed in the first position of Qi Jiguang on purpose, not accidentally. This form incorporates the most important and basic self-defense action called in *Bubishi* **Sun and the Moon hand**. This action is the mother of everything, and everything further have base on this principle. Some can **find this action** in different variations according to author experience **in all Kata**. Nowadays this is forgotten in sports, but this is the biggest and most important martial arts secret that soldiers had to learn! It is based on the Sun Tzu saying, "In ancient times, an experienced warrior first assured his own invulnerability and then waited for the enemy's vulnerability." The whole action follows the five animal generation cycle and allows you to become "stronger" and more victorious with each move.

First, redirect the attacker's energy to flow like water (Leopard), i.e., to bypass you.

Water nourishes Wood.

Then catch, the attacker like a Crane (wood).

Wood feeds fire.

Be fire, act like a Dragon, and become invisible to the attacker.

Fire creates earth (snake).

Hit with a whip motion, as a snake does.

Earth bears (creates) metal (tiger) necessary to disable the attacker.

Following the generation, cycle will make you invincible.

In *Tang show* most important action is Sun and the Moon hand as described in verse 6 and later in book *Bubishi* named Sun and the Moon hand (drawing 41). We do not know who and when wrote first *Bubishi* document. Based on his research author is speculating that first *Bubishi* book arose round year 1.800AD.



Fig. 6 Verse 5 and 6 (Cambridge university library)

Verse 6 is teaching most effective protection.

Mount the dragon backwards, make a ruse by pretending to lose and feign flight;
Entice the opponent to pursue and move in, then turn on him and attack.
If the opponent thinks he can rely on strength and ferocious steadfastness when he attacks,
How can he withstand my sequence of blows?

We have a dragon style fight. This means that from the early beginning attacker do not see defender anymore. Yes defender must always pretend that he is going to lose the fight. All techniques are based on surprise. This is misleading and make attacker superficial because he is convinced that he will win. Attacker thinks that he is strong and ferocious and that he can break everything facing him but in real when attacker start attack only thing defender have to do is to let him pass by and after act as a dragon. (Attacker do not see defender anymore and is incapable to withstand defender sequence of blows whatever they are.)

Sun and the moon hand form have base in Sun Tzu (Tzu Sun 2009) wisdom: **“In ancient times, an experienced warrior first assured his own invulnerability and then waited for the enemy’s vulnerability.”** First of all, we have to focus on the fact that we are talking about invulnerability and not defense or protection. You can protect yourself with a shield or helmet, but you are still vulnerable. You can make yourself invulnerable only if you do not practice defense in a face-to-face in a frontal manner, but rather let the attacker slide by you and come behind his back where you are invulnerable. There is one wisdom more: **“A skilled warrior attacks so that the enemy cannot defend himself and defends himself so that the enemy cannot attack.”** This is used in all Kata self-defense. There is one more important wisdom by Cao Cao (155-220AD): **“If an enemy attacks, he becomes vulnerable.”** This are most important teachings.



Verse 6



Fig. 7 Bubishi No. 41 (Nissan 2016)

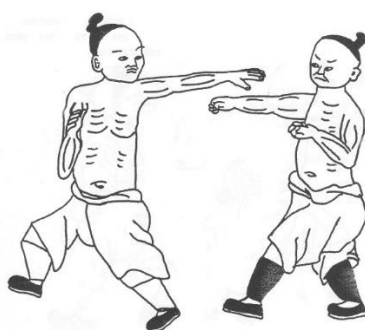


Fig. 8 Bubishi No. 41 (Fu Roku 2016)

Like the sun and the moon being opposites.
technique.

Like the wind cloud fist

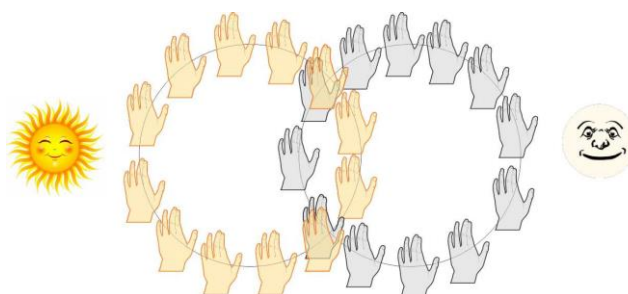


Fig. 9 Sun and the moon Aauthor)

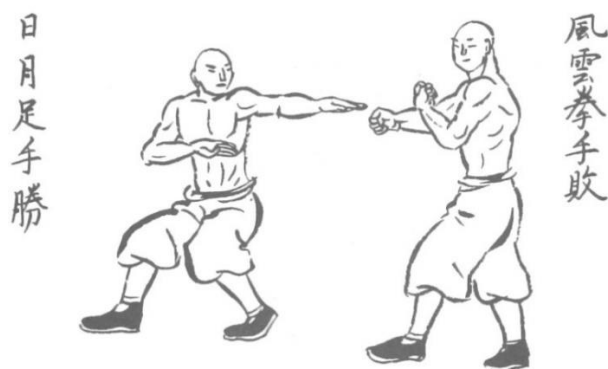


Fig. 10 Bubishi No. 41 (McCarthy 2008)

Sun and moon hand. Wind cloud boxing.

The man on the right side is boxing to the wind cloud. This means that he is punching an empty space. The man on the left side will catch the right-side man with his left hand and pull him closer, positioning his body behind the right-side man. At the same time, he will exchange his hand positioning as the sun and the moon are rotating (visually) around the Earth. Whatever he does later is his choice. This action is the most important White Crane action for redirecting and catching an attacker, and can some find it in nearly every Kata. General Tien (Nissan 2016) and Fu Roku's (Fu Roku 2016)) *Bubishi* shows the man on the left with hands in starting position, and McCarthy's (McCarthy 2008) *Bubishi* shows the man on the left hands in their final position. This is most important and most basic move taught in any *Kata*. This is how attacked person make attacker energy to flow and pass by and this is how Master Wong (Wong 2002) say: **When you are attacked from the front, make sure you always change to the side.**



Fig. 11 Sun and the Moon 1 (Author)



Fig. 12 Sun hand 2 (Author)



Fig. 13 Sun and the Moon crossing 3 (Author)



Fig. 14 Moon hand 4 (Author)



Fig. 15 Sun and the Moon 5 (Author)

32 Verses and Bubishi teach a martial art for the weaker defender successful defend against a stronger attacker.

Why to use Sun and the moon hand and not block (*Uke*) attacker. The perception that *uke* means “block” has roots in the incorrect perception of *Kata* in general. If some do block, he have to be able to stop the attacker therefore he must be at least as strong and heavy as the attacker.

Newton law

This is nicely explained by Newton’s third law of motion, which kids learn as early as in primary school: When one body exerts a force on a second body, the second body simultaneously exerts a force equal in magnitude and opposite in direction on the first body. Newton’s second law is also important for our understanding: $F=ma$, the vector sum of the forces F on an object is equal to the mass m of that object multiplied by the acceleration vector a of the object. This all means that if some is weaker and have smaller weight, he need to accelerate his hand move (block) much faster than the attacker in order to be able to stop attacker. But the problem is the penetrating energy to his body in such an action. Smaller attacked body will suffer much more damage than the bigger attacker’s body. Some have to imagine a truck and a car. A car can theoretically stop a truck, but just imagine what will be left inside the car after the collision. Thus, *uke* definitely does not mean block because weaker person) cannot stop a bigger and stronger attacker. This goes against basic physical laws. A smaller person-woman must use his smaller amount of energy to redirect the energy of the attacker to bypass, and then catch the attacker like a tiger. To divert the attacker’s force a , only a small portion of the attacker’s force is needed, and so even a woman can accomplish this with her force w . W and a must go somehow in same direction to sum up. This mean that correct redirection will accelerate and consequently imbalance attacker and in all likelihood he will fall to his nose when a rashly pass the w , especially if she stumble him with foot.

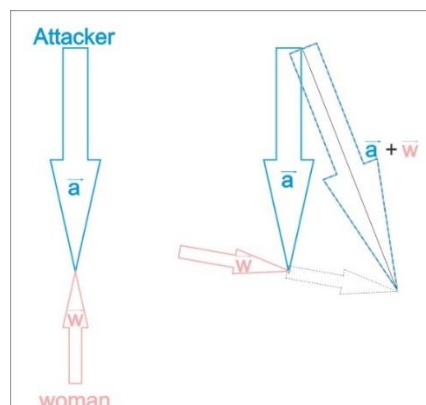


Fig. 16 Direct block and redirecting energy (Author)

Some can use redirection in any sort of attack, even when attacked by Katana, a one-sided blade, or a knife.

According to the above, the block is senseless and mostly impossible except in a sport fight, where we have two same category fighters with about the same weight and power and similar skills. The medieval European drawing fig. 17 shows the possible combination of *Soto-Uchi-Ude Uke* in the final position. You may find this drawing in the Nürnberg museum, and the originals come from London’s Welcome Library.



Fig. 17 Nürnberg museum (Author)

For a better understanding, some must focus on the following words: catch, raising, outside, arm, down, turn aside, and sword hand. *Tang show* taught that we should use both hands: one to catch and pull the opponent's hand or leg, and the other to push or punch. By using both hands in opposite directions, some double his strength and the efficiency of his action. With *Shuto Uke*, some have to focus on the words "sword hand." This does not mean that your hand is a sword and is punching or cutting something. Instead some have to imagine that both of his hands are catching a sword's handle, and then some will immediately understand the real meaning of the *Kata*. Details can be found in author book (in *Kata* is everything you need).

Besides Sun and the Moon hand there are in *Kata* several other actions but all are based on attacker energy redirecting instead blocking. There is no block in *Tang shou*!

The hidden self-defense within *Kata* is intended for the successful defense of a weaker person (woman) (Šefer 2017) against a stronger person. *Kata* self-defense forms use defensive rather than offensive skills. Thus, we cannot learn how to start an attack through *Kata*, which were created for self-defense. We can only learn how to successfully finish fight with defense. *Kata* give us instructions to defend successfully ourselves in different ways against various attacks. To understand these skills, it is necessary to understand yin and yang. Some must understand the concept of yin and yang as a universal dualism. Its basis are complementarity for many areas of classical Chinese science and philosophy; it could serve as a starting point and guide to Chinese traditional medicine and a basic principle for various postures and exercises in Chinese martial arts. It is one of the main symbols of the teachings of the ancient Taoist philosophers. These philosophers suggested that there are two poles of existence—they are opposite, but also complementary.



Fig. 18 Yin and Yang (Author)

The basic concepts of the yin and yang of Chinese philosophy interplay between suggesting the possibility of the dominance of knowledge and skills over raw power. Yang is masculine, white, bright, honorable, hard, lifting, active, loud, fast, and superficial (on the surface). Yin is feminine, black, dark, treacherous, soft, plunging, passive, silent, and hidden beneath the

surface. All of these qualities are intertwined together to oppose this philosophy, and it is necessary to grasp and understand how to defend yin from a yang attack. This is how a woman (weaker person) can defend herself against a stronger attacker. Today, the well-known *Kata* explanations and sport martial arts neglect this dualism. They come to a solution using yang versus yang, where two approximately equivalent fighters bump into each other like two bulls. These fights take plenty of time so the viewers can satiate their need for violence.

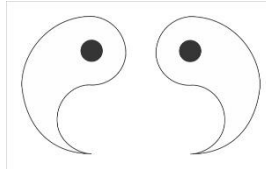


Fig. 19 Yang vs Yang (Author)

This way of fighting is in strong contrast to the beliefs of the Chinese philosopher Sun Tzu, who clearly said, “In war, victory must be fast, otherwise the men get tired,” and **“In war, the price of victory is not prolonged warfare.”** because the *Kata* originated from China

The essence of *Kata* understanding is based on yin and yang. We need to look through the eyes that see the yang stand up and with all its strength (broad white field) and little common sense (black spot on a white background) crash into yin, which immediately escapes, removes itself, and bends to yang, chasing its tail; at the same time, and with all of its sense (of the black field) and little power (white point), yin crashes into the weakest part (tail) of the yang to overcome him. In this way, the symbol of yin and yang tells us how we have to fight. We have to redirect all of the attacker’s force to past us and then attack his weakest point. Sun Tzu said, **“In ancient times, the experienced warrior first assured his own invulnerability, and then waited for the enemy’s vulnerability.”**

Out of to us preserved documents, we may say that original Martial art is art of defense.

There is one more thing that we have to distinguish before we go forward. **From the early beginning of all living creatures there where two sorts of fight.** Most common and nearly every day present fight for insemination right where males in front of females fight to show off who is stronger and more appropriate inseminator that will give healthy successors. In such fight nobody normally die therefore, we can call this fights **sport fights**. On the other side, there is **real life fight** in animal and human world where creatures hunt one another and where always somebody die. Humans have besides that, real life fights in form of wars where purposeless many people die.

Most kata explanation by twenty century masters are based on strong man approach and face to face combat and therefore are from historical and practical point of view wrong. Author will explain on *Jion Kata Bunkai* explanation two such approach some may find on YouTube. First is from mid twenty century master Taji Kase (1929-2004) who was Gichin Funakoshi pupil and who actually brought Karate to Europa and second modern beginning twenty-one century master Ian Abernathy. For better understanding author propose reader to seat in front of computer and open YouTube both master videos. From the beginning observer can detect strong man approach. Both masters were- are strong persons and both masters are not aware

that this what they era able to do most of population cannot. Strong man approach is one way or another the mother of all misinterpretations. Defense action that weaker person cannot do against stronger person attack are senseless. Author will give comment on first two actions from *Jion Kata*.

Taiji Kase explanation (Kata Shotokan JKA Jion (Taiji Kase))

We will observe first the older master who give “original” karate but not *Tang shou* explanation. Kase in first action in backward step block simultaneous hand and foot strike with from in to out block. At first this is not suitable for weaker person because hand muscles pushing together are stronger than those pushing from in to out. All animals including human have this arrangement of the muscles just imagine monkey climbing the tree, tiger hunting a deer or kitten hunting the mouse or any for extremities animal running. To confirm the foregoing some should do experiment with nearly same size and strength partner by one pushing hand together and another pulling them apart and then change in action. In both cases the one who will push together is winner. As second nobody attack with leg and hand simultaneous this is practical nearly impossible because this put the body out of balance and disable body to perform foot or hand strike with full power. Immediately after that Kase push to front falling attacker back. For such action Kase need large amount of energy. Yes he can perform that because Kase is double weight of attacker but imagine a 50kg girl to push Kase back. This is impossible. Author do this comparison because all today known **old and original Kata forms are White Crane style Kata and creator of White Crane style is by legend 16 years old girl Fang Qiniang**. Therefore **all actions that cannot be performed by 16 years old girl are incorrect!** After pushing attacker back Kase do opening of attacker by pushing atacker hands apart. Author already explained that weaker defender cannot perform this. After hands opening Kase do foot front kick and push attacker away. This is against basic principle of *Tang shou* where there is no push away. Defender never push attacker away and then start defending again. This is senseless. Besides that Kase or anybody else on this way push attacker so far back that placing double punch do not reach attacker at all.

Ian Abernathy explanation (Jion Bunkai: Opening Sequence and Drill •11. sep. 2018)

Now let move through time for nearly century where Karate practitioners do not believe or accept everything served by twenty century Japanese “masters”. Author have chosen Ian Abernathy who with his explanation is very close to original *Tang shou* but still so far away, because he still do attack from front in the way as strong man do and with sport philosophy approach infected way. Abernathy explain first move as defend from a choke. Presented is not normal choke as normal people do it in front position with both hands. For such defense there is much better defense in Bubishi No. 1 drawing implemented in *Seienchin Kata*.



Fig. 20 Bubishi No.1 (Fu Roku Bubishi) Fig. 21-23 Escape from the choke (Author)

Choke performed on Abernathy video is professional assassin (ninja) killing choke performed with claw hand (Bubishi).



Fig. 24 Claw hand throat catch. (Šefer 2013) Fig. 25 Claw hand pencil brake. (Šefer 2013)

This type choking is not meant for choking in classical way but for killing by tearing of trachea and Adams apple away together with cervical aortas and veins. Abernathy defense is done in same way as Kase do it from in to out. This is in principle wrong and here even helps attacker to tear of Abernathy throat. This what he show later is typical sport approach where there are limitations and rules and where for certain it is not allowed to kill. *Tang shou* have nothing to do with sport it is defense killing art. After that Abernathy step outside what is not bad but he holds attacker hand as strong man with his hands in short distance not spreading his hands to achieve lever effect. Weaker person cannot control attacker in this way besides that such holding in real life is impossible to do because there is no strong *Kimono* cloth but most probably easy to tear of cloth. Then Abernathy do front kick with his foot to attacker left leg and in real life he would push attacker away doing same mistake as Kase. Abernathy even do additional in Kata non existing step to come close enough to finalize double right –left hand punch to attacker head and then he jump away from attacker. This is completely sport approach. What happen in such case? Abernathy get points and fairly wait or is by a judge interrupted until attacker will recover and be able to fight again. For real life defense this is senseless. Weaker defender cannot wait for attacker recovery because he will beat him now for sure. There is no surprise advantage anymore. Now attacker know that defender is martial artist and dangerous therefore attacker will attack much more carefully and with full power.

Author's explanation

At this point author must first explain what is self-defense hidden in *Tang shou*. Defense start when attacker attack defender. At this point defender should try to solve the situation using Dao philosophy where **the highest level of fighting is no fight** (4th century BC) (Lao Tzu Quotes). This is important because as Sun Tzu (544-496BC) wrote (Sun Tzu 2009): **“If the enemy is strongest immediately upon arrival, then we should not go into battle, but wait until his zeal and courage yield and only then attack. It is important to defeat his confidence.”** If attacker even after that attack than defender must follow next Sun Tzu saying: **“In ancient times, an experienced warrior first assured his own invulnerability and then waited for the enemy’s vulnerability”** and Cao Cao (155-220AD) wrote: **if enemy attacks he becomes vulnerable**. After attacker attack defender can successfully first defend and then attack to kill attacker. Old martial art of *Tang shou* teach to kill on the end and solve the problem forever. In ancient times, it was not possible just to knock out or seriously harm and leave attacker a live (Šefer 2017) because he would come later back to defender and kill him if necessary even from behind or in sleeping.

Above are basic principles of *Tang shou*.

Before we go to *Kata Jion* explanation we have to accept that all *Kata* forms have knowledge life worth and those who know those secrets did not want to discover them to others.

Therefore all *Kata* forms were created in hidden and to commoner most avoiding way so that the masters could perform *Kata* in front of an observer not discovering him art of self-defense. Old masters were magicians of hiding therefore in *Kata* nothing is as commoner see on first sight and nothing happen as commoner can predict.

There is no first action and second action as described by Kase and Abernathy. There is first action where defender step back to defend from attacker left foot kick. Defender do Sun and the Moon hand attackers left foot kick push a side. In this way defender become not visible dragoon behind the attacker body making attacker incapable to see defender. After that defender step in and do Sun and the Moon hand action on attacker left hand (do step through the door in verse 1 form). (Abernathy is close with his explanation.) Defender hold strongly attacker hand using lever causing pain in attacker shoulder fig. 15. With right hand catch attacker hair tail and kick with right foot in attacker knee from back to lower and drop attacker down close to defender, step on attacker leg to break him knee and tear Achilles tendon and make him incapable to get up and resist. Defender finalize defense with *Nukite* style neck break where defender first knock attacker out on ST5 point to release neck muscles and then in pulling back way break attackers neck.



Fig. 26-28 Nukite neck break (Author)

Second action is defense from right hand punch where defender turn to the right and execute Sun and the Moon hand form on attacker right hand, step through narrow door catch attacker hair tail and lower attacker with left foot kick. Defender finalize defense with *Nukite* style attacker neck break. **This is *Tang shou*! First redirecting attacker energy and after in safe position from behind kill attacker.**

Why we have Kase and Abernathy style explanations?

It is in human subconscious to attack frontally and open stomach. This is a way how animals hunt. They attack soft stomach front where it is easier to penetrate body than from behind where no much muscles or fat are but just hard spine and ribs. Reason for attacking from front have important base in wish of attacker to make attacked person ugly by harming his face to make him less attractive for females or hitting growing to make him incapable for reproducing. As interesting fact author describes that in seventeen century in Amsterdam there was legal to fight with the knife and cut opponent face. Any other harming was punished by law. Attacking and defending in face to face form is so deep in our subconscious that it is hardest to learn not to block but to redirect attacker energy and attack from behind when learning *Tang shou* Martial art of defense. This is the top secret of *Tang shou*. Not knowing that it is impossible to understand *Kata* forms *Bunkai*.

Final conclusion is that human subconscious and out of that strong man face to face combat and sport approach are most important reason for wrong *Kata* forms *Bunkai* perception.

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