

SAN CHIN KATA HISTORY, EVOLUTION AND BUNKAI

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Background

San Chin Kata is like all other *Kata* self-defense training form. At this point we have to be aware that W. Cynarski and J. Skowron¹ wrote: Self-defense are technical and tactical skills to avoid or fend off an attack and neutralize the attacker. Author will reveal based on 20 years of research his findings about *San Chin Kata* and its secrets. Common spread believe is that author of *San Chin Kata* is Buddhist monk Bodhidharma who lived somewhere between AD420 and AD634. By the legend he visited Shaolin monastery (founded AD477) where he taught monks martial art of self-defense later named 唐 *Tang* 手 *shou* where *Tang* means the Tang dynasty (618-907AD) and *shou* means hand. From the *Tang shou* in the 20th century, a martial art sport called 空 *Kara* 手 *Te* emerged. The common belief immediately struck with historical facts. Holcomb² expressed the doubts on his existence and his merit for martial arts. According to Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism³ the earliest accounts of a person known as Bodhidharma appear in the Luoyang qielan ji (The monasteries of Luoyang) written by Yang Xuanzi in mid sixth century and Xu Gaosheng Zhuan write about him mid seventh century. Shahar⁴ writes that he is considered by most historians as a legend that arose out of Chan Buddhist school need to have direct connection with Buda.

In addition *San Chin Kata* contain circular hand move named Sun and the Moon that is part of White Crane style that was by legend invented in 16th century.

Because there are no physical or original written documents and because only legends were preserved to us we will most probably never know what is truth and what is legend and who and when created *San Chin Kata*.

Problem

The biggest problem in *Kata* meaning research is that the masters who teach *Kata* each know how to perform *Kata* in their own way, but no one can scientifically justify why to perform *Kata* in this specific way. Additionally, all interpretations are based on a sports approach, where Ludus and Agon are applied and not real life where bigger and stronger attack weaker. Author have no doubt that *San Chin Kata* is very old and that contain due to age most basic self-defense movements. This *Kata* nowadays exists in a huge number of versions, and from this arises the problem and the question of which version is actually correct or the original one and if any at all. Problem is that people tend to exaggeration with everything. At the beginning this exaggerations normally lead to progress but history show that exaggerations always go out of the line and end with spoiling of good ideas. Like antient Spartans who started to compete who is better sportsman but on the end Spartan civilization has fallen when they start to compete who is able to eat more and drink more wine. Another problem with the humans is that the clever people are not majority of the population and there is no pill to get smarter but there is whole industry that promote and sell stuff to make the people stronger. If the person is weak it always have possibility to get stronger but there is no way to get smarter therefore strength is so popular because people with will for improvement can get at least stronger if they cannot get smarter and if somebody is explaining how strong he is, he shows

with that immediately how „smart“ he is. This fact has led to *Kata* being interpreted today from the point of view of strength rather than the art of self-defense.

Author have seen performing a *San Chin Kata* as:

Yoga style with deep breathing that make practitioner relaxed as *Sudarshan Kriya* where practitioner fall a slip what is unsuitable for self-defense where some must be focused but this explains why many like to execute *San Chin Kata* in this way.

Body building style where practitioners wear heavy rings on hands and foots and where movements are slow but on other side some must be fast to self-defense.

Under water to get stronger, but training under water is meant to prefect someone moves, because water resistance teach exactly what and how to do. Doing this training in cold water or under a shower author find as complete nonsense.

Some do *Kata* with open palm thinking that this *Kata* contain *Nukktie* punches and some with the fist thinking that this *Kata* have boxing fist punches. Both approaches are wrong, because this *Kata* like all other *Kata* use *Ji (Yuji)* hand forms and have no boxing fist punches.

Some call this *Kata* mother *Kata* and some call it Father or Iron Shirt *Kata*. Mother *Kata* is OK because this is to their believe first *Kata* and this is maybe the true.

Father or Iron shirt *Kata* is wrong precepted. Practitioners contract the muscles and master hit them hard „to check if the muscles are properly tightened“. This is mostly subconscious or conscious sexual harassment-perversion-pedophilia.

The true meaning of Iron shirt is in defense technique that make defender protected like wearing the Iron shirt.

Method

Before starting to do research of any *Kata* most important awareness is that nothing is as it seems at first glance and nothing will happen as a common observer expect. *Kata* were made in such a hidden way that masters could perform them in open space keeping all secret techniques hidden from non-invited observers. Therefore what common observer see at first glance is mostly not correct answer. Same is with the rare antient books about self-defense where the most known is *Bubishi* done by several editors based on notes of many unknown Chinese students who studied in Fujian round 1.850AD and the older les known *Jixiao Xinshu* (1.561AD) wrote by famous Chinese general *Qi Jiguang* which contain very important sentence that these techniques are for those who cannot be strong and thereby determined that these techniques are meant for self-defense.

Therefore author decide to do research as proposed by Descartes by doubting everything and to consider true only that which is unquestionable and author followed philosopher M. Certeau⁵ who pointed out importance for researcher not staying in close community therefore Author was like *rōnin* who listened at all *Rashomon*⁶ truths that depend on observer's standpoint.

Author followed the footsteps of British historian K. Jenkins, as a “disrespectful researcher” of the past, by being like a kid from Andersen fairy tale: Emperor's New Clothes yelling: Emperor is naked.

For the research, author used a qualitative method and opted for probabilistic sampling in the population practicing karate. Author started practicing Karate 54 years ago, learned more than 20 *Kata* forms and spent more than 20 years for visiting different master's seminars round the globe to find out what is common knowledge. During this time author read about 90 books that have connection with *Kata*. Author wanted to find out what is right and what is wrong and he followed Confucius⁷ instruction: If I am walking with two other men, each of them

will serve as my teacher. I will find out the good points of the one and imitate them and the bad points of the other and correct them in myself.

To evaluate collected knowledge and understand *Kata* author had to collect several other knowledges on:

Chinese and Japanese history, culture and philosophy to understand basic approach to *Kata* creation and understand soul of nation and especially to be able to understand symbolic words.

Acupressure point fighting method to understand where kick or punch should take the place.
Kinesiology to understand human body moving abilities.

Anatomy to be aware of muscles, bones, nerves and blood vessels.

Psychology to understand natural human responses.

Undisputed laws of mathematics and physics, especially Newton's laws, classical mechanics, vector analysis and the fulcrum with leverage, which make it possible to understand which technique is suitable for the defense of the weaker against the stronger.

Results

Author put all Rashomon truths he found in different versions of *San Chin Kata* performances together in a form for which he think that could be close to original. When deciding what to take in and what to leave out as exaggerating he respected: Chinese and Japanese history, culture and philosophy, acupressure points, kinesiology, anatomy, psychology, mathematics and physics especially vector analysis and fulcrum with lever.

Author have to point out that he have nothing to say to those who are training *Kata* for the tournaments his interest was always focused on the original purpose of *Kata*, which is in real life not attacking but self-defense for a weaker person against the stronger one. Author opinion is that *Kata* forms are based on natural circular moves where sun and the moon hand is base for everything. Sun and the moon hand is universal key that explain most self-defense hand moves present in *Kata* forms. Author found sun and the moon hand on Bubishi book poster No. 41 which have a base in „Mount the dragon backwards“ from Jixiao Xinshu8 No. 6 poster.



Fig.1 Mount the dragon backwards (author)

When compared several *Bubishi* editions posters and texts the best explanation-instruction come out by combining Fu Roku *Bubishi*⁹ and General Tien *Bubishi*¹⁰ together.

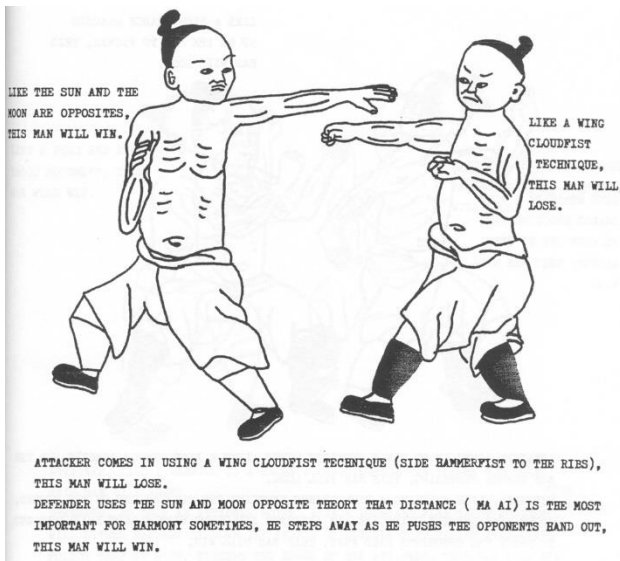


Fig. 2 Fu Roku *Bubishi*



Fig. 3 General Tien *Bubishi*

The only written-drawn document with a small part of San Chin Kata application older than from 20th century author found in *Bubishi* book¹¹ edition.

Article 27: Zheng's Twenty-Four Iron Hand Applications and White Monkey Style



There is no explanation to accompany this illustration. However, it does say "Aunt and Uncle Zheng." I assume that they are in some way related to Zheng Lishu (see Article 1, p. 97). In the Chinese ranking system, terms like big brother and uncle are used to denote seniority. (TR)

Fig. 4 Aunt Zheng (*Bubishi*)

Drawing for which there is no explanation is showing aunt Zheng how she use *San Chin Kata* to protect her from uncle Zheng using sun and the moon hand.

Understand of *San Chin Kata* start with the name of *Kata*. The correct name for San Chin is in Chinese San Zhan where San (三) means number three and Zhan (戰) means war or in Japanese San (three) Sen (battle). To start understanding we have to apply Sun Tzu Art of War wisdom: “In ancient times, an experienced warrior first assured his own invulnerability and then waited for the enemy’s vulnerability and a skilled warrior attacks so that the enemy cannot defend himself and defends himself so that the enemy cannot attack. Knowing this two wisdoms it is obvious that war or battle start with defense and out of it author find more suitable to percept *San Chin* as three defenses. From this point further it is much easier to understand *San Chin Kata* which have three actions:

1. Sun and the moon hand form with stepping in to attackers’ space to get control over him.
2. Holding the Shoulder traps as it explain Qi Jiguang in his *Jixiao Xinshu*.
3. Sun and the moon hand form with stepping back and leave the attacker energy to pass by.

Kata explanation start always with foot work. In *San Chin Kata* practitioner stand in triangle that is the most stable stance. Three leg chair never rock and is stable on any kind of the ground. Center of body gravity is in the center of triangle what is achieved by little dropping of body. *San Chin* stance as performed today is nearly ideal form of triangle where one leg takes care about stability in direction front-back and other leg in direction left-right. The movement of the legs is today called „hourglass“. The old title used in sixteen century by Qi Jiguang „half a moon“ is much more appropriate.

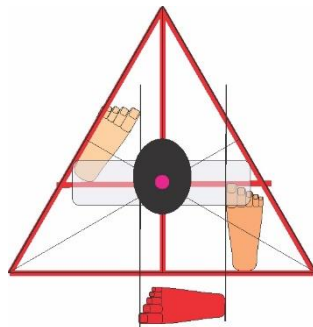


Fig. 5 San Chin Stance (author)

When performing *San Chin Kata* the whole body is in the shape of a mentally disorientated person with moving and balance detector problems. Those people must use mechanical principles to maintain balance for their walking where their subconsciousness tells them how to walk in the most stable way. Here Author strongly agree with Kantaro Matsui¹² that Budo practitioners as a whole can gain a lot from „Budo for the disabled“. Therefore to learn how-to walk-in *San Chin* stance is best to observe mentally disorientated people. Prove for above statement is based on Edmund Husserl¹³ (1859-1938) opinion that human knowledge is based on experience and in the empirical research done by Edward Thorndike¹⁴ (1874-1949) who proved that learning can occur without conscious awareness. Such movements are stored as muscle memory that enables humans to perform tasks without conscious effort.

Vector analyses was first described by j. Willards Gibbs and Edwin Bidwell Wilson in book *Vector Analysis* dated 1901. Therefore antient masters could not know anything about it and could not create this stance in scientific way but they knew that for protection attacked person must divert punch or arrow or spear or sword to pass by which can be done only by

turning the body and for appropriate body turn defender must turn the foot or both feet like in *San Chin Kata*. In this way *San Chin* stance was born not out of need for stability but out of need for diverting the attacker.

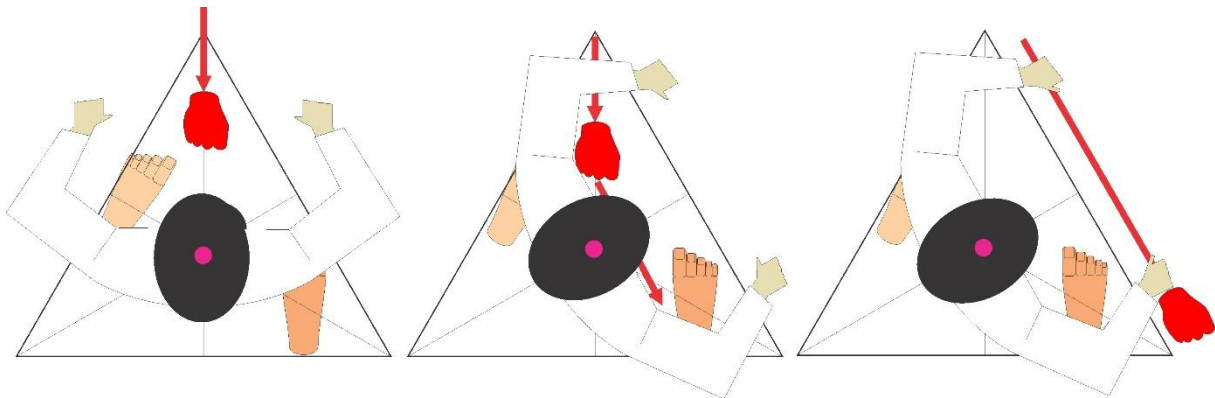


Fig. 6 Redirecting the energy (author)

San Chin stance enable defender to redirect attacker punch very easily similar as bullet ricocheting by turning his body to 60° what is much better than necessary little bit than 45° . This is why this is *Iron shirt Kata*. Later on in the beginning of twentieth century when art was turned in sport and something for strong man practitioners found that in fact this is most stable stance and same as old Spartans start to exaggerate by training how strong blows they can withstand or how they are able to stand on top of mowing carriage.

Pryor talking about hand work we have to become aware of important fact on human behavior. Causing pain is the oldest way of teaching people what they may or what they may not do. Animals use the same method. This method has remained with us from the times when speech was not yet so developed that we could explain our requirements to fellow human beings. With causing pain the parents taught the children and the stronger enforce their will to the weaker ones to fulfill their wishes, needs and demands. Violence is very strongly rooted in the human psyche, because the bully always with violence wins a reward, that is, something that he wanted in the form of goods or sexual or other desires. That is why the desire to hit the opponent is so great. In sports, it is based on the desire to assert the individual fighter's wish to win a reward in the form of recognition or a medal. As a result of this innate quality of people, there is believe that *San Chin Kata* also teaches punching with one hand and punching with both hands. In reality, there is no one-handed punch in *San Chin Kata* because the "punch" is intended to twist the arm. There is no two hands punch in any *Kata* anyway, because *Kata* are intended for the defense of the weaker against the stronger, and the weaker uses one hand to control or pull the attacker and other hand to punch attacker. In this way defender increases the speed of his fist by twice, which means ($W_k = m \cdot v^2 / 2$) a fourfold increase in the kinetic energy of the impact and a fourfold increase in the effect of defense.

Hand work start with action known already in seventeen century by European wrestler Nicolaes Petter¹⁵. Nowadays this action is forgotten and practitioners with sport infected minds use this action as a fist punch.



Fig. 7 Worstel-Konst

Fig.8 Nicolaes Petter (1624-1672)

Fig. 9 Worstel-Konst



Fig.10 San Chin action No.1 (author)

Same instruction from mid of nineteen century can be found on Bubishi poster No. 14



Fig. 11 One-sided triangular horse-ride step (General Tien Bubishi)

Detailed instruction can be found in Georg Dillman¹⁶: Method of Pressure Point Fighting. Pressurizing H2 and Li13 point makes the elbow bend and causes pain that make this action suitable for weaker attacked person to.

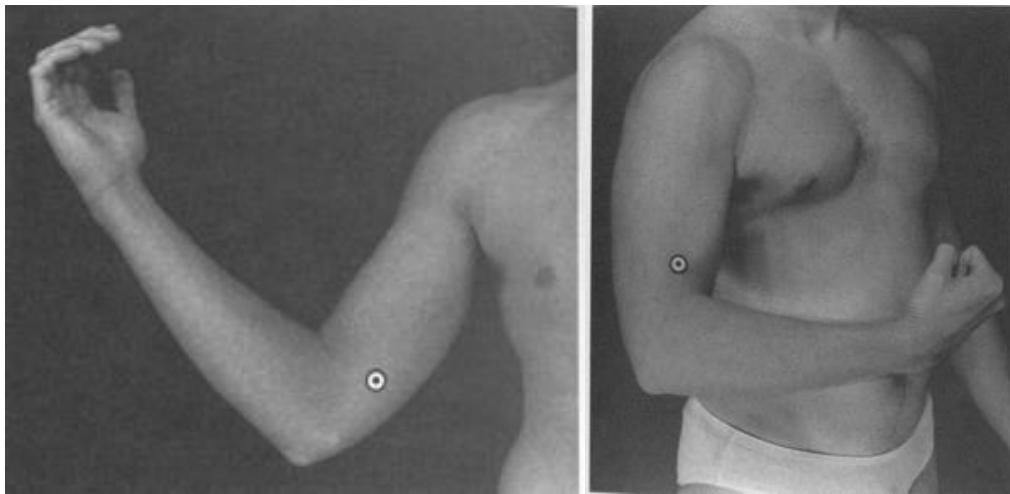


Fig. 12 Pressure points (Georg Dillman)

And last but not the least same action is penultimate action in Tatsuo Shimabuku (1908-1975) family *Sun Su Kata*. According to author opinion Tatsuo Shimabuku (Dragon man) was maybe one of the last masters who maybe knew the original art but unfortunately he unexpectedly died by hart stroke and his knowledge was lost with him.

For second action there is no much to say except that kid must use his weight and not hand power. Picture tell more than a thousand words.



Fig. 13 San Chin second Action (author)

The third action in mowing back direction is typical Sun and the Moon action that redirect attacker force to pass by. Attacker is almost always stronger and bigger than attacked person therefore direct block is impossible as are clearly showing vectors.

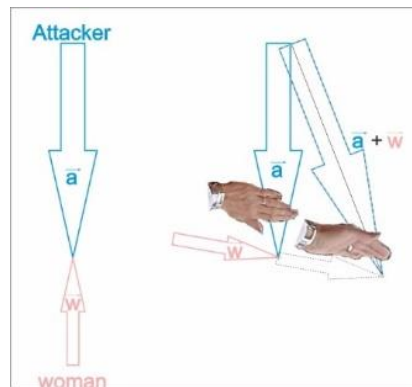


Fig.14 Vector analyses (author)

A lighter person use his smaller amount of energy to redirect the energy of the attacker to bypass. To divert the attacker's force a , only a small portion of the attacker's force is needed, and even a woman can accomplish this with her force W . W and a must go partially in same direction to sum up. This mean that correct defend-redirection will not stop attackers hand but accelerate it. In this way, the woman avoids hand injury and redirects the attacker's hand in the most effective way.



Fig.15 Redirecting the energy (author)

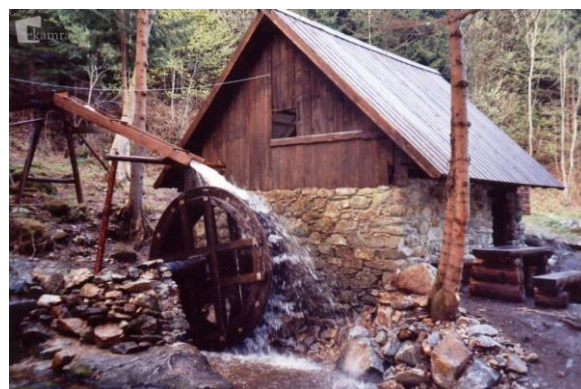


Fig. 16 Jakcev Mlin (Zavod za kulturo Slovenska Bistrica)

Defender must like water wheel follow the stream to achieve max. efficiency at $v_{\text{wheel paddle}} = v_{\text{water flow}}$ and in this way protect his arm from injuries.



Fig. 17. San Chin action 3 (author)

Conclusion

The value and understanding of *San Chin Kata* was lost before Karate spread from Okinawa in the beginning of the twentieth century therefore we will most probably never know who is creator and when *San Chin Kata* occur and how original form looked like but with great probability and based on the laws of exact sciences, we can claim that *San Chin Kata* contain only three defense forms which we can find in *Jixiao Xinshu*, *Bubishi* and many other Kata and that in *San Chin Kata* there is no attack with fist or foot.

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