

NAME:

Bushido-kai Kata Comparison Series
Analysis and Applications

Meikyō
and
Hosu Rohai 1, 2, 3

Seminar support materials
from Shihan Tony Annesi, Takeshin Sogo Budo

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Teiji KAZE (France) performs Shotokan Meikyo.

MEIKYŌ & ITOSU ROHAI 1,2,3

Additional Information compiled by Shihan Tony Annesi

History & Name

- Meikyo means “Bright or Polished Mirror.”
- It is known that Meikyo was devised from Itosu’s earlier kata Rohai nidan; however, parts of Meikyo clearly refer to parts of Itosu Rohai shodan and sandan as well; so, we believe that Meikyo is a re-creation and compilation of all the Itosu Rohai kata. Who is directly responsible for the creation of the kata is not clear. However, since Funakoshi is credited with renaming the Rohai kata, it is likely that it was he or his son Yoshitaka who produced the Meikyo version.
- Itosu’s version of Rohai may have been loosely based on the Tomari-te version of Rohai which is often referred to as Matsumora Rohai. This kata (Matsumora Rohai) bears only a weak resemblance to either Meikyo or the Itosu Rohai and has more similarity with Gankaku (Chinto). However, it should be studied both as a contrast with Itosu Rohai and a comparison with Gankaku (this comparison is planned for a future seminar).
- Rohai means “Sign or Emblem of a Crane.”
- Ironically, crane stances are absent from Meikyo; but, they appear in Itosu Rohai Shodan in a form somewhat different than the hooked foot crane stance of Matsumora Rohai or Gankaku. In Itosu Rohai Nidan, a similar but lower stance, the *kosa dachi* (crossed stance), is used. In Itosu Rohai sandan, there are no remnants of the crane stance per se.

General

- The idea of a polished mirror can suggest a recurrence of technique (this happens both in the Meikyo and in the Rohai forms) but can also suggest the idea of working to perfect oneself through repetitious practice of the kata. The mirror is also one of the national treasures of Japan, relating back to its folk tale origin. Finally (and this is my own preference), *mirror* refers to the "reflective" embusen of the kata (see diagram on next page.)
- Meikyo was NAKAYAMA Masatoshi’s favorite kata. Nakayama is reported to have said that Meikyo is very similar to a folk dance performed to convince the goddess Amaterasu, the goddess of the sun, to come out of the cave she hides in (part of the folk origin of the Japanese people).
- In Meikyo, the three repetitions of a 45° angle (L&R) with a block and then a lunge punch were originally all performed with upper blocks, but KANAZAWA Sensei (and Takeshin follows this example) performs down, middle forearm, and upper blocks. If we trace this sequence back to its roots we get mixed results. The Itosu Rohai Nidan has a middle hook block and the Nidan and Sandan both have upper blocks followed by lunge punches.

Other Versions

- Generally, only Shotokan practices Meikyo; but, Itosu Rohai is practiced by other styles, notably Shito-ryu.

References:

- KANAZAWA, Hirokazu, *Shotokan Karate International Kata (Vol. 1)*, 1981.
- MABUNI, Kenei, *Karate-do Traditionnel Shitō-ryu*, SEDIREP, 1995.
- MORRIS, Vince & Aiden TRIMBLE, *Karate Kata and Applications (Vol 4)* Stanley Paul Pub., 1991.
- NAKAYAMA, Masatoshi, *Best Karate (Vol. 11)*, Kodansha International, 1989.
- REDMOND, Rob, Shotokan Planet Website (<http://www.24fightingchickens.com>).
- SAKAGAMI, Ryusho, *Karate-do Kata Taikan*, Japan Publications, 1978.

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Roland Habersetzer (France) performs Shotokan Meikyo

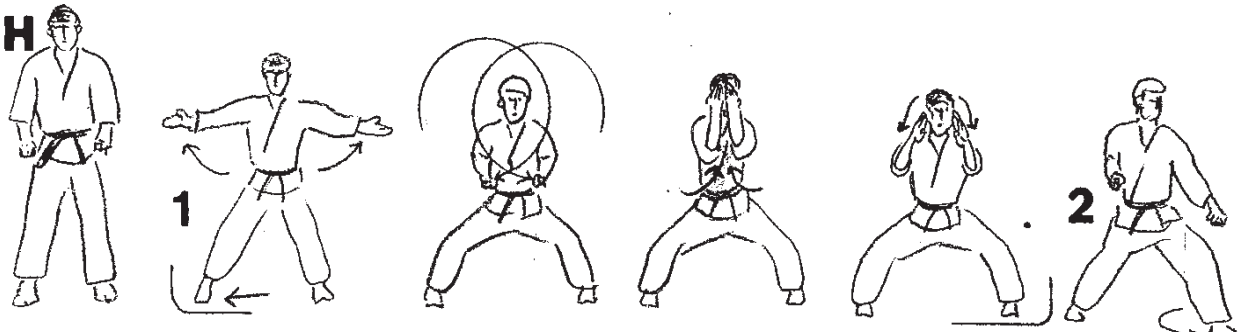
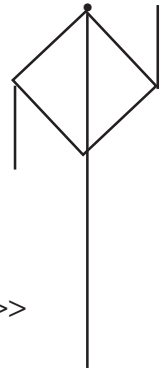
MEIKYO (Shining Mirror)

The embusen of Meikyo is unusual. It is a diamond with a stem and two smaller "wings."
One half also "reflects" the other.

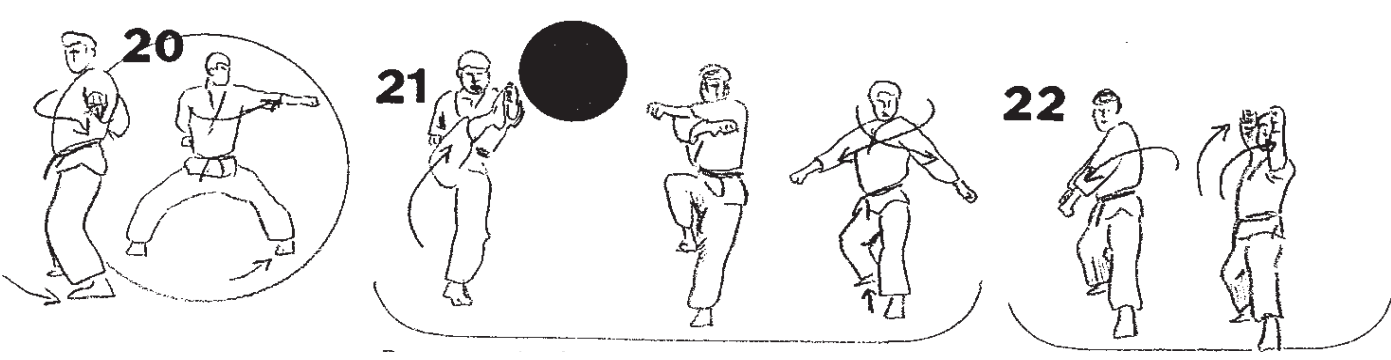
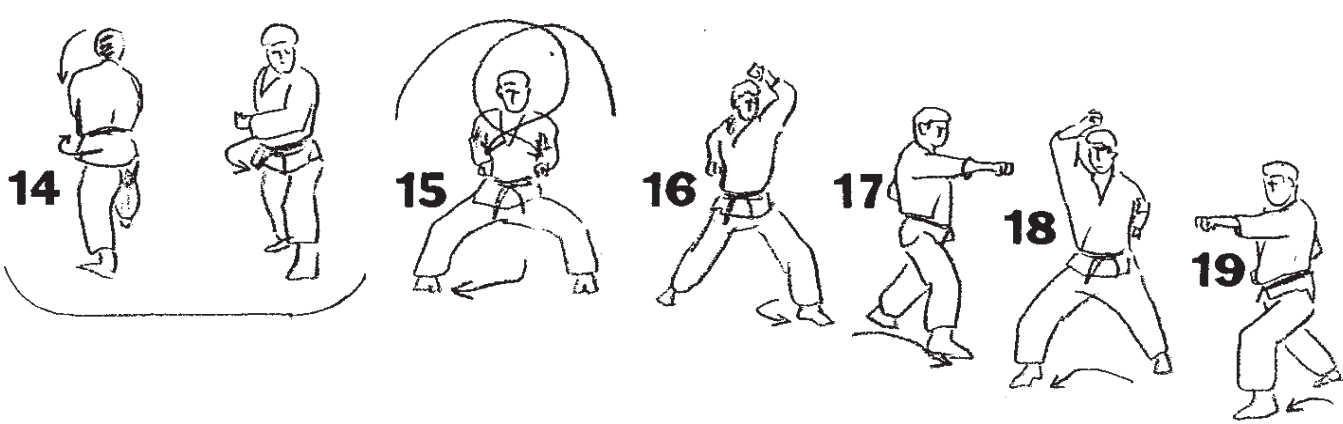
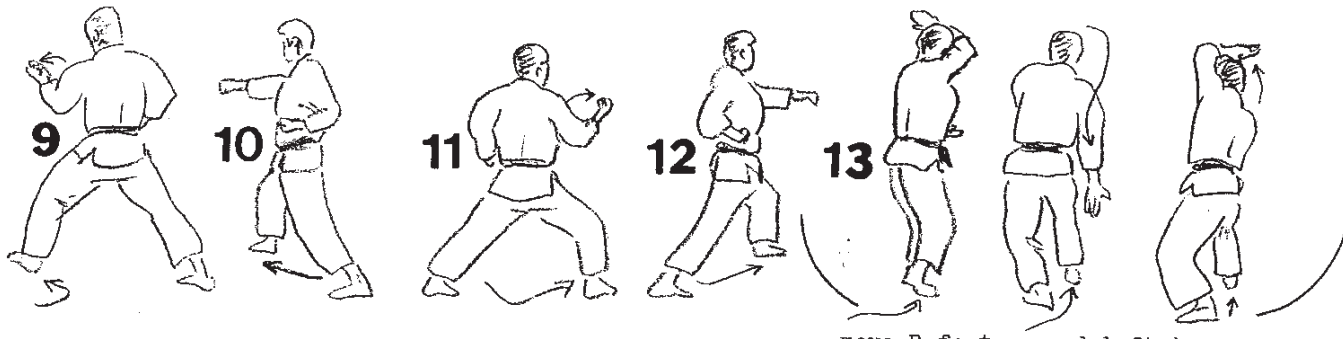
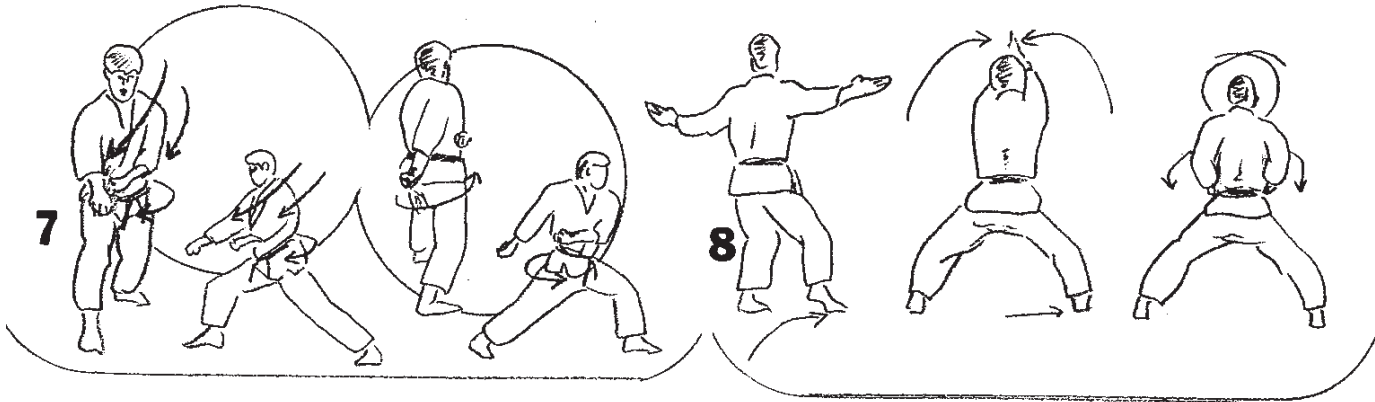
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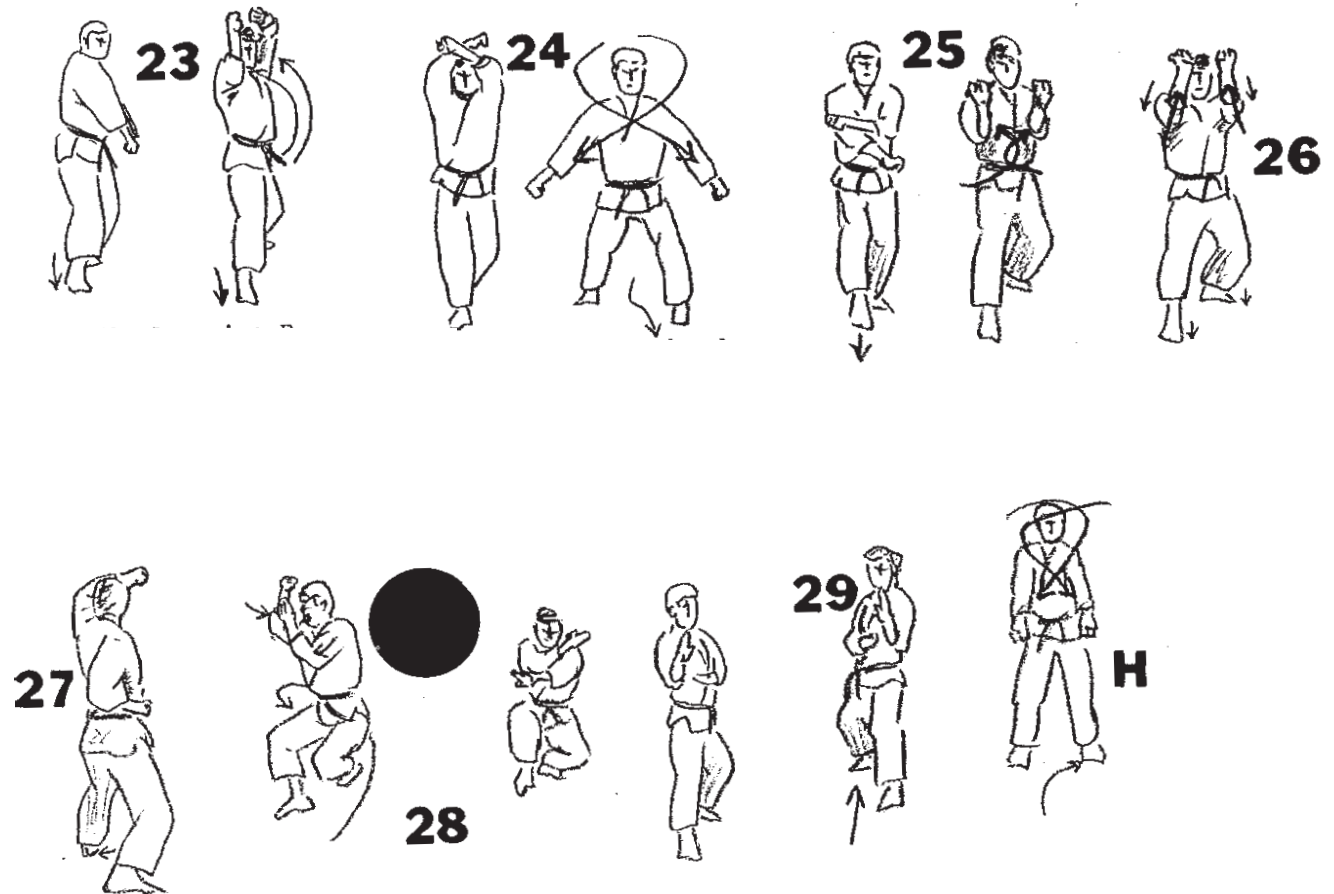
Meikyo

"theoretical" embusen >>>



MEIKYŌ

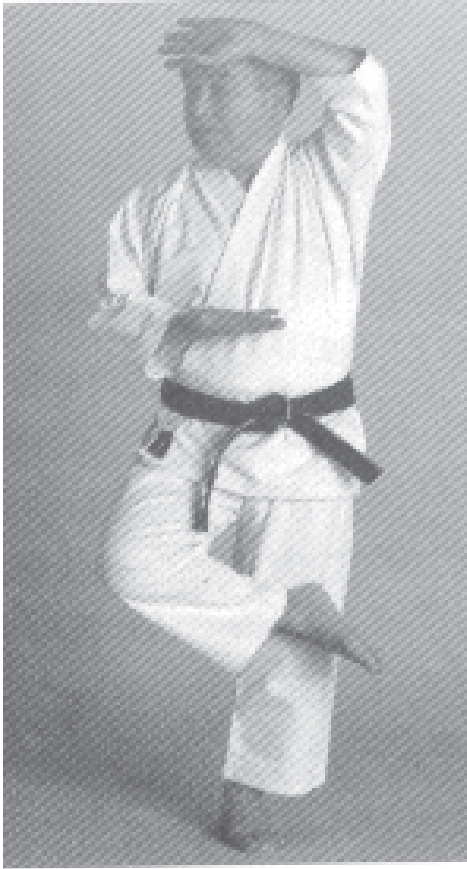




NOTE:

This illustrated outline of the kata comes from *KARATE-DO NO SHOSAI (The Details of Karate-do) Volume 4: Nidan* by Tony Annesi (Available through BUSHIDO-KAI BUDOYA, this manual includes 9 other forms, suggested bunkai, as well as Takeshin Nidan sparring and kicking requirements.)

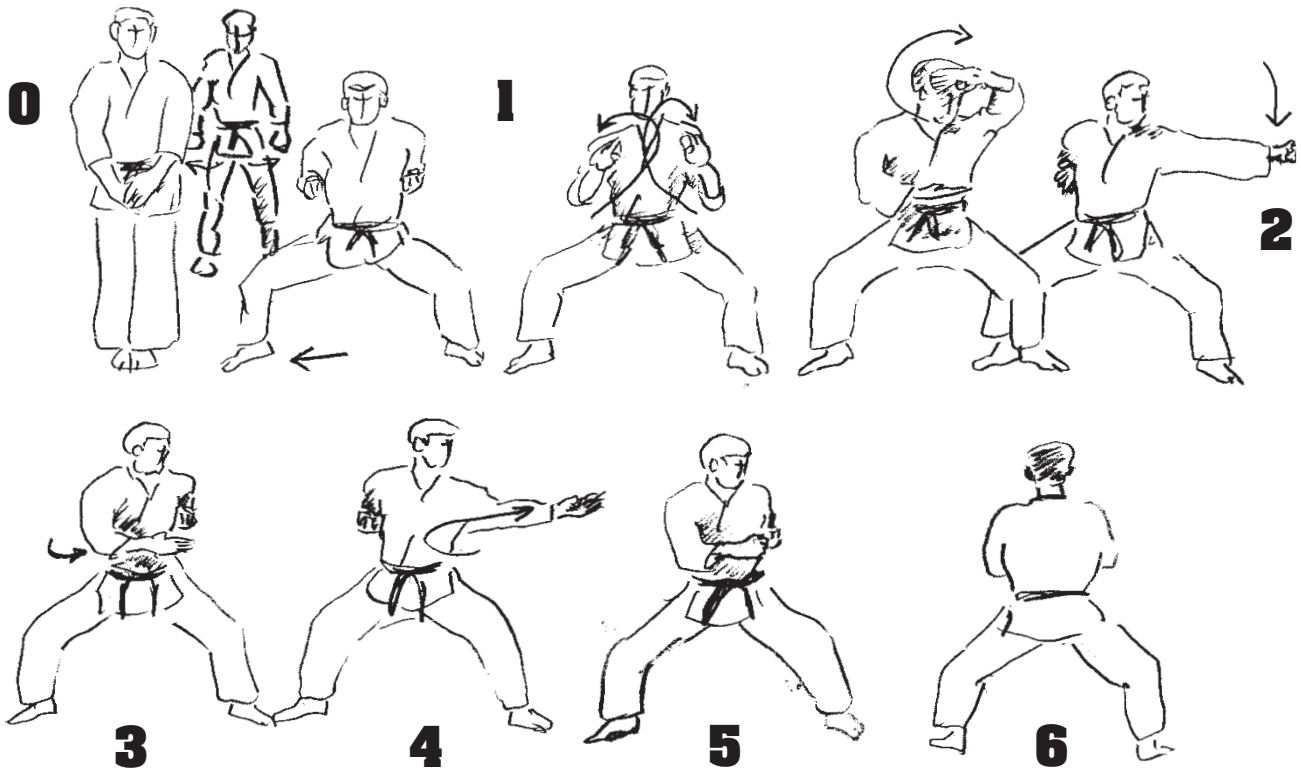
Illustrations for Itosu Rohai 1, 2 and 3 (following) were based on photographs from *Karate-do Kata Taikan* by Ryusho Sakagami (Japan Publications) and were adjusted to conform to the method of kata execution used in Takeshin Karate-do.

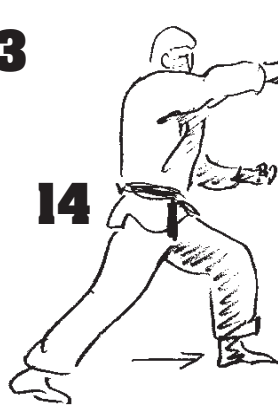
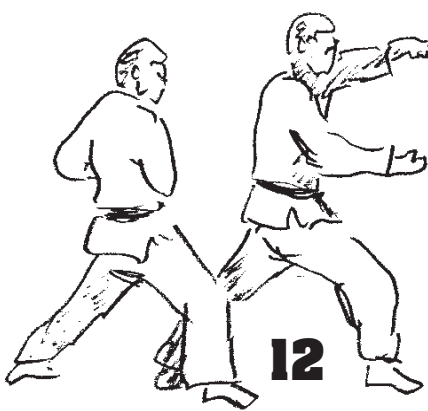
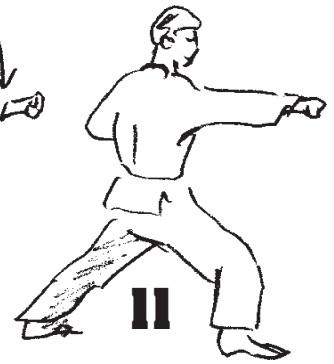
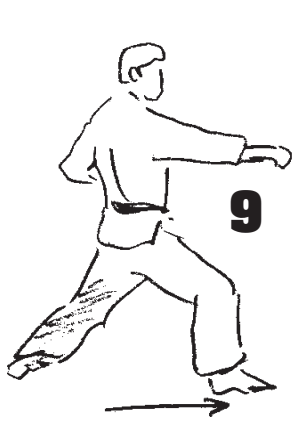
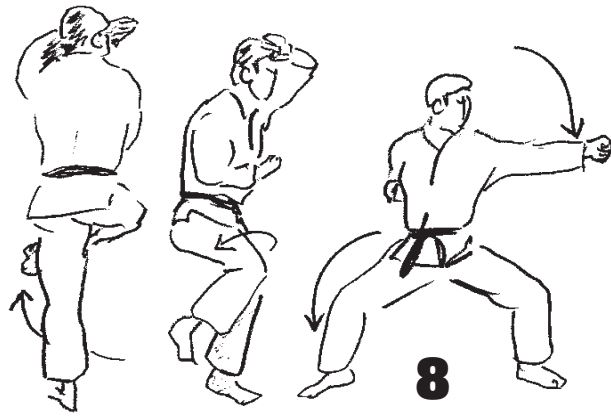
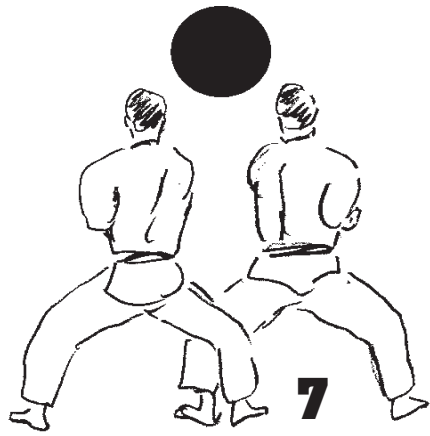


Itosu-ka ROHAI Shodan (Itosu-version SIGN of the HERON First Level)

鷺牌

Kenei MABUNI (son of Kenwa MABUNI)
performs Itosu Rohai Shodan, from the French publication
Karate-do Traditionnel Shitô-ryu





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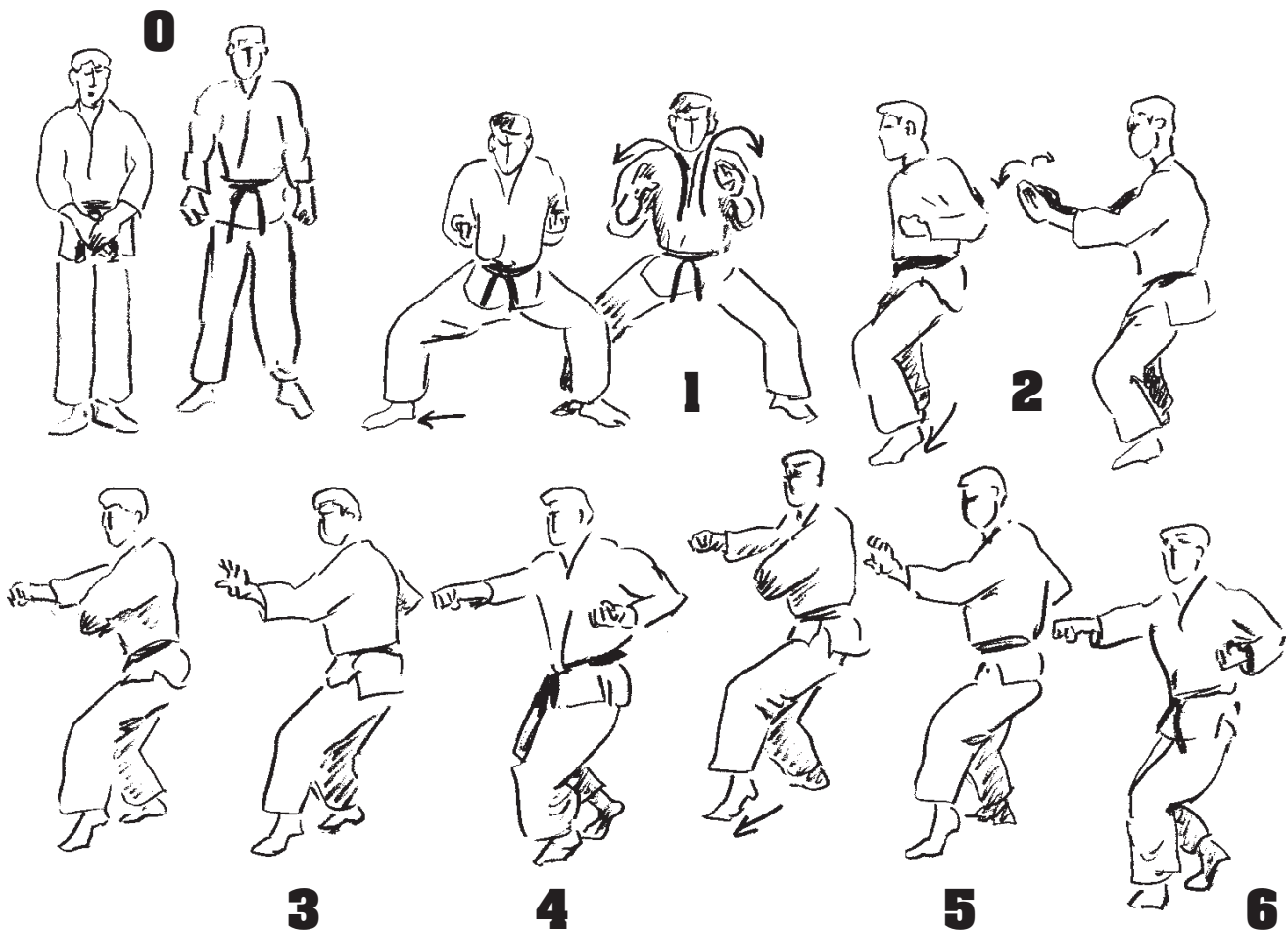
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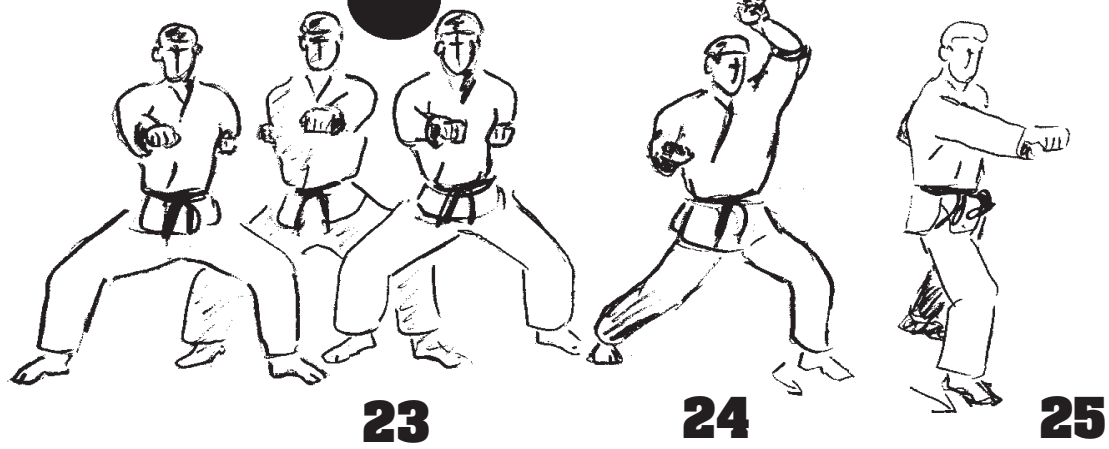
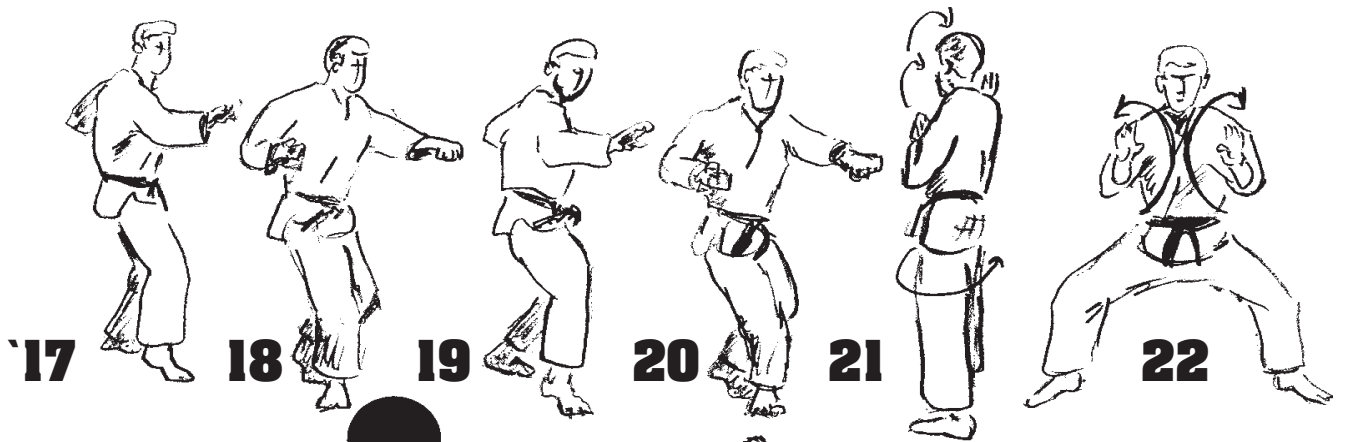
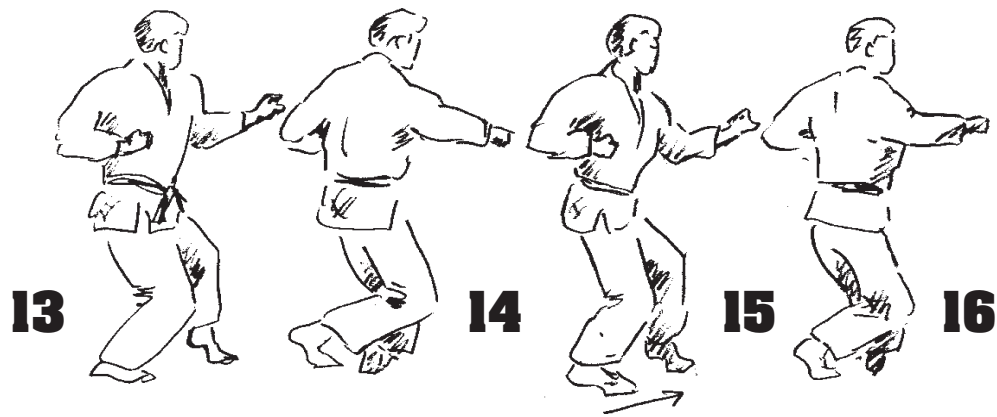
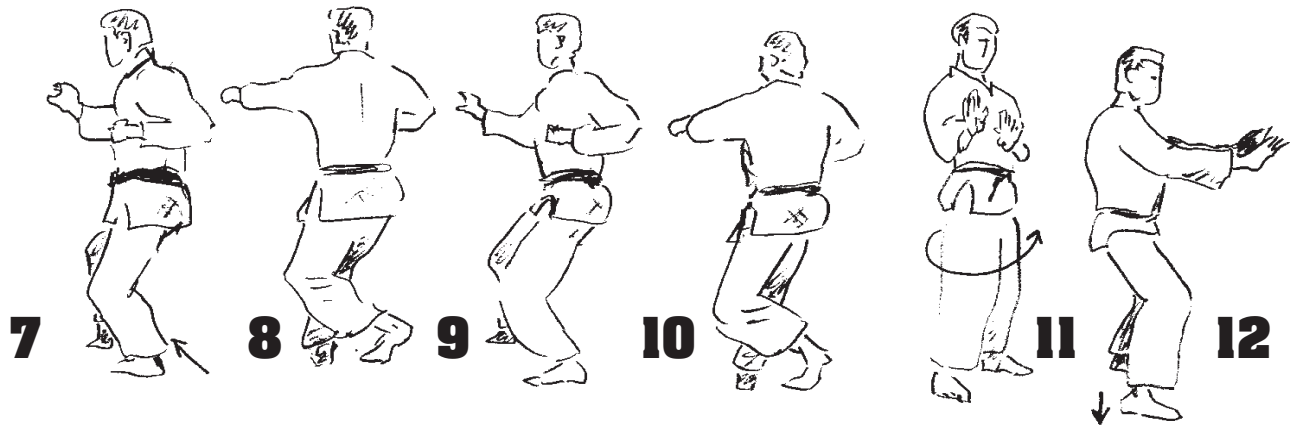


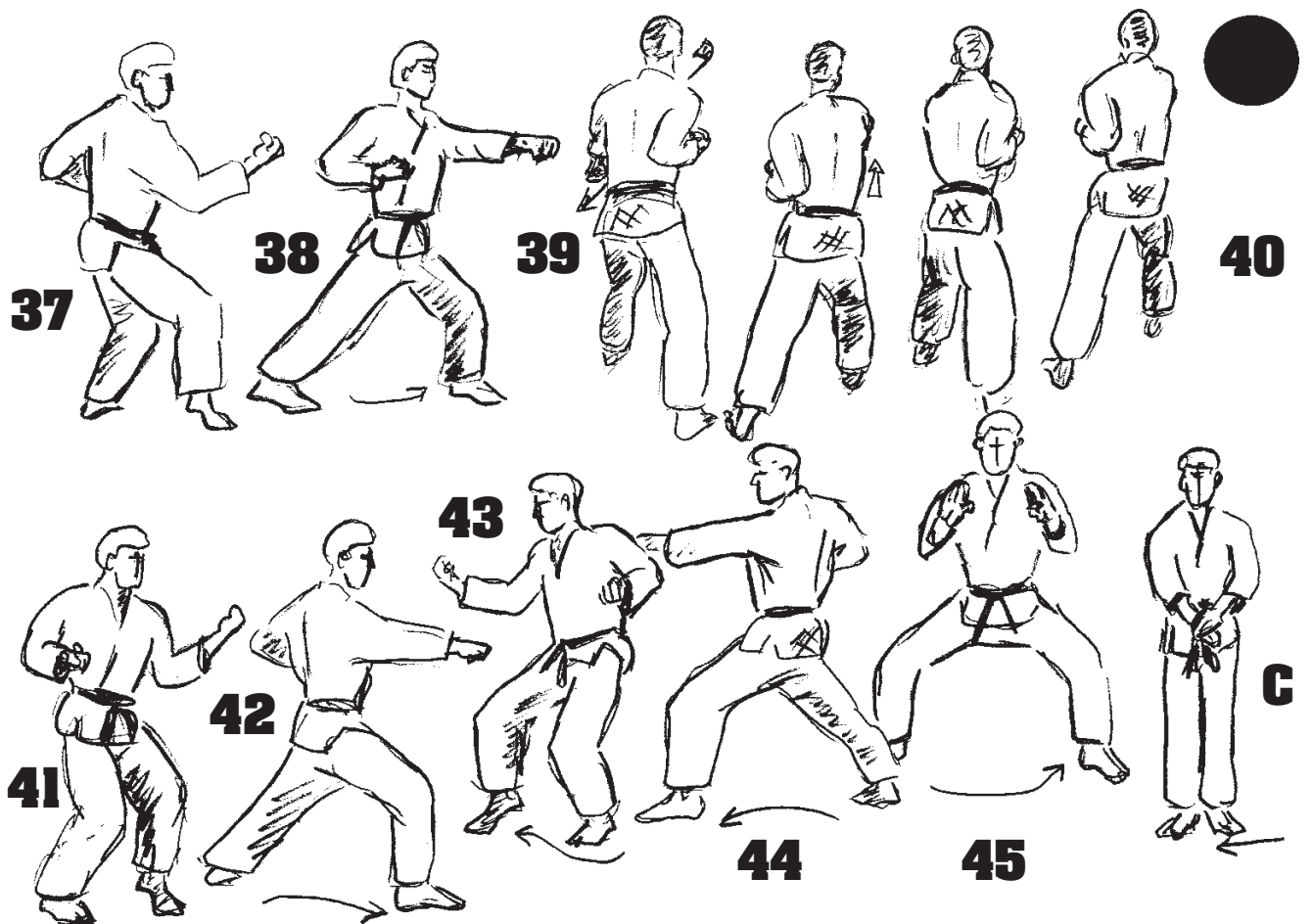
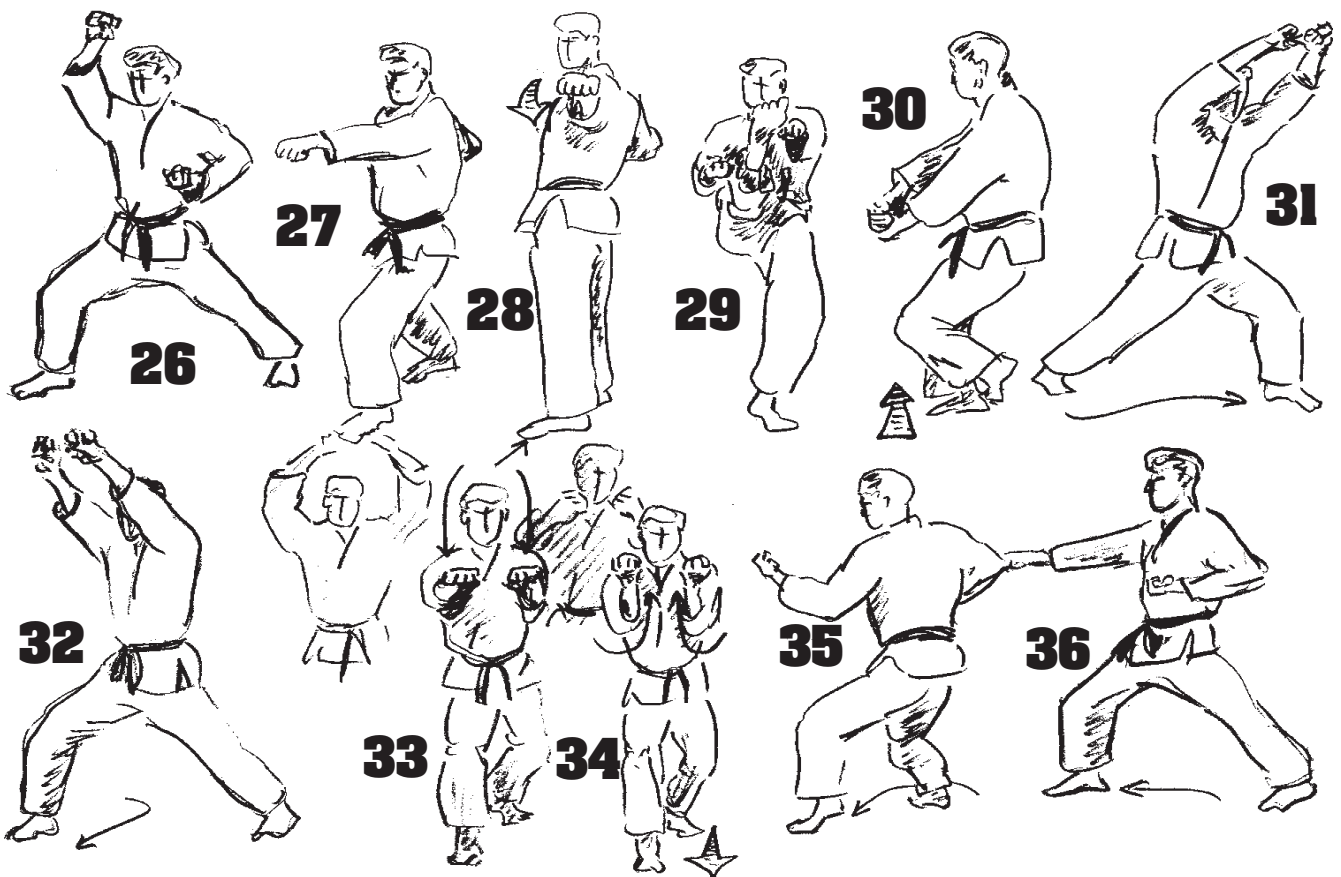
Itosu-ha ROHAI Nidan (Itosu-version SIGN of the HERON Second Level)

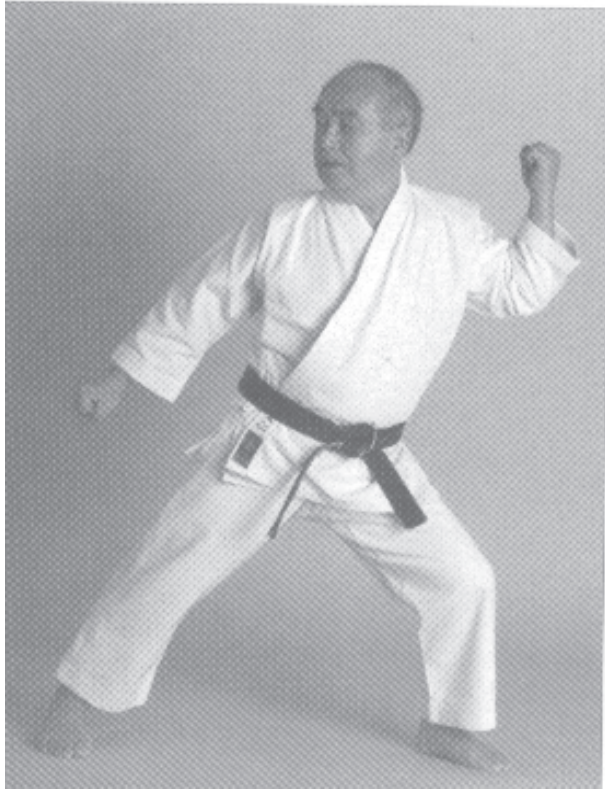
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Kenei MABUNI (son of Kenwa MABUNI)
performs Itosu Rohai Nidan, from the French publication
Karate-do Traditionnel Shitô-ryu





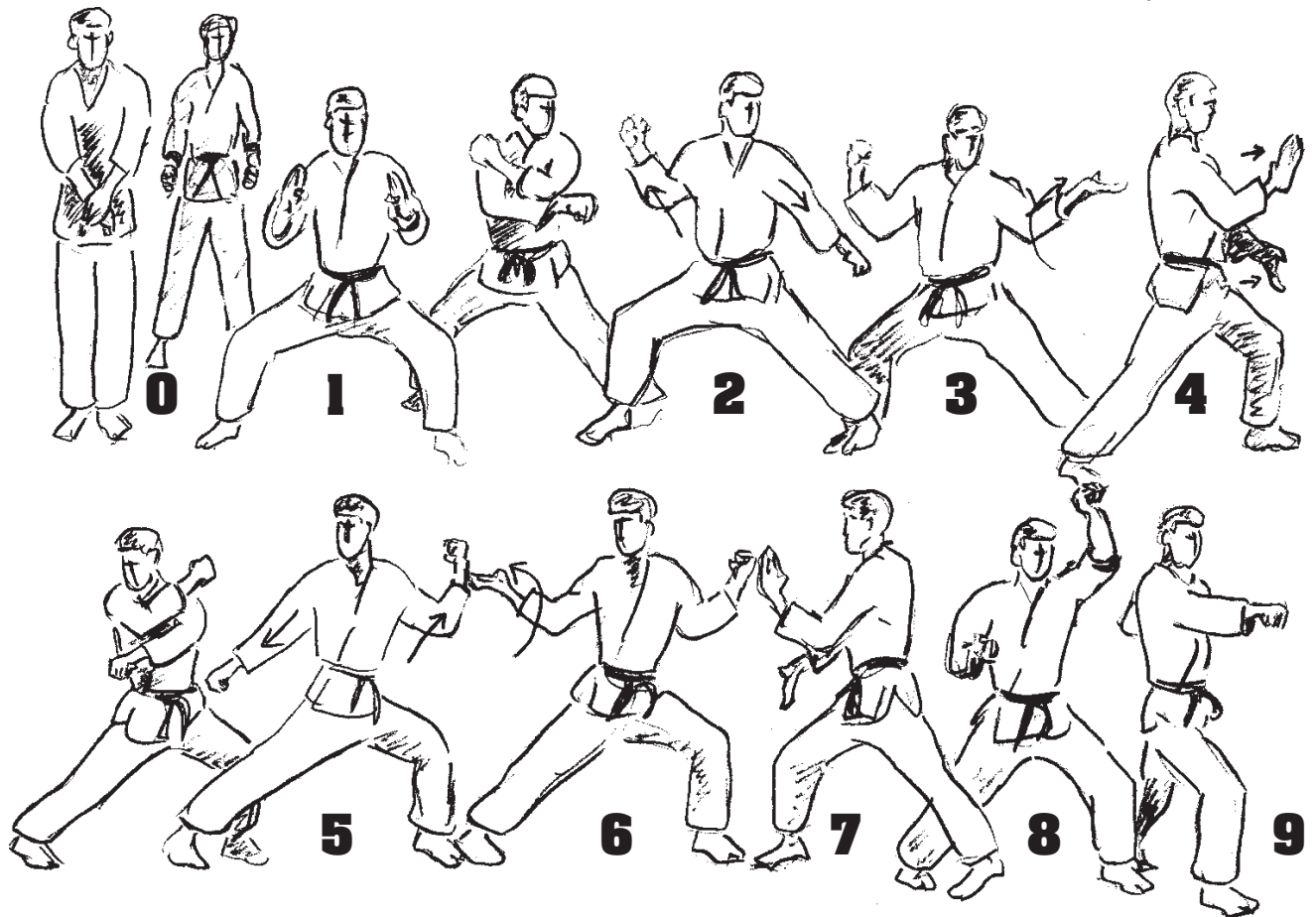


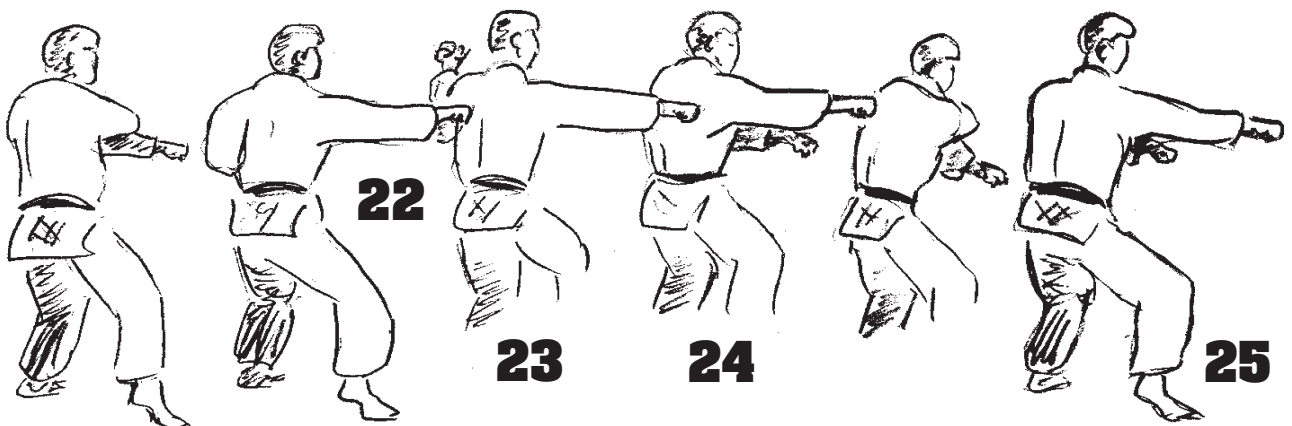
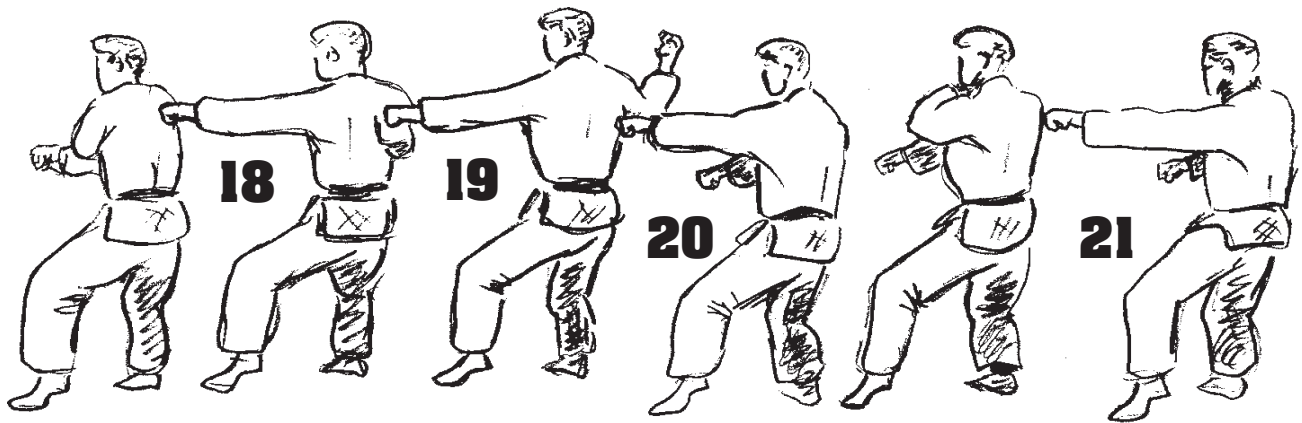
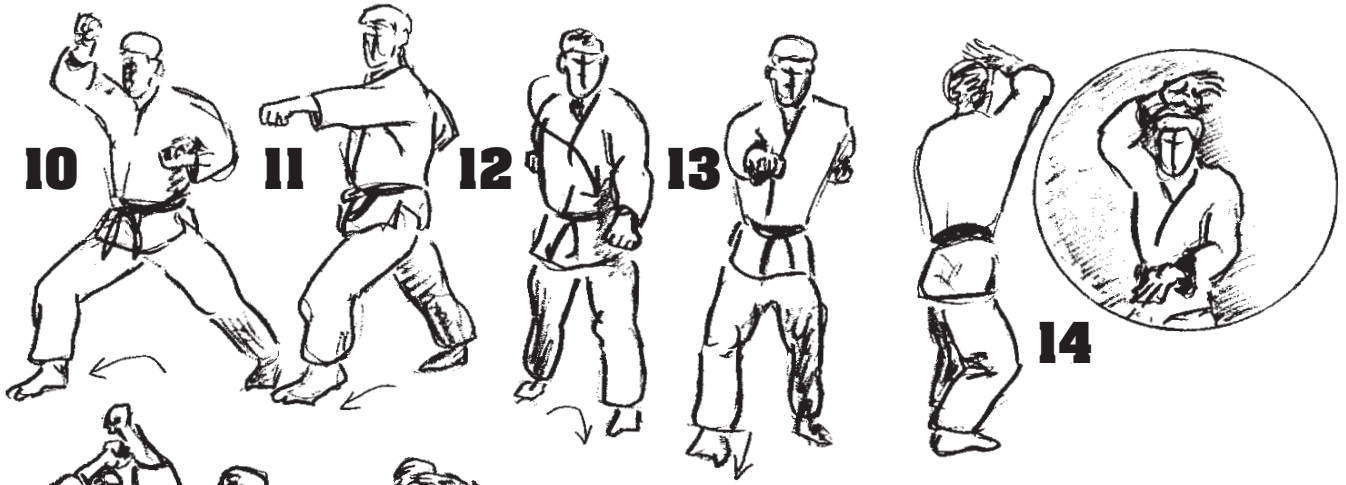


**Itosu-ha ROHAI
Sandan
(Itosu-version
SIGN of the HERON
Third Level)**

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Kenei MABUNI (son of Kenwa MABUNI)
performs Itosu Rohai Sandan, from the French publication
Karate-do Traditionnel Shitô-ryu





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