

Kobudo Kata Competition – Some Facts



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Basic History

There are different theories about how Kobudo developed on Okinawa:

- I. Kobudo developed out of the inhabitants necessity to defend against bandits and attackers.
- II. The Satsuma Clan placed a ban on carrying weapons against the defeated Okinawan military. Consequently, Kobudo developed as an alternative means to defend against the abuses of the Satsuma Clan with whatever means possible.
- III. A less popular theory is that Okinawans who engaged in trade and / or traveled to China came in contact with foreign teachers and experts from whom they learned some of the skills.

Schools which continue to influence Okinawa Kobudo

1. Hoshin Ryu

The Founder of Hoshin Ryu was Masakazu Miyagi (no relation to Goju Ryu Founder Chojun Miyagi). He taught on the peninsula of Motobu, in the town of Toguchi.

Masakazu Sensei taught the great karate teachers Kanyei Uechi, Shinyei Kyan, and Heisaburo Nakamura.

Most popular kata are Kunishi Bo which was created by Shinkishi Kuniyoshi, Shushi no Kun, and Choun no Kun.

2. Yamani (Yamane) Ryu

Yamani Ryu was founded by Masami Chinen Sensei who taught Bojutsu privately in the town of Tobaru located in Shuri. When Masami Chinen Sensei passed away, his school ceased to exist. However, some of the kata were preserved by Seitoku Higa Sensei of Bugeikan and by Shugoro Nakazato Sensei of Kobayashi Shorin Ryu.

Chinen Masami Sensei named his school in honor of his father Sanda Chinen. His father was known as 'Yamani Usume' or 'Yamane Tanmei'.

Sanda Chinen Sensei learned from his father Chinen 'Pechin', and from Shichiyanaka Chinen. Chinen 'Pechin' had learned from Sakugawa 'Satunushi' while Shichiyanaka Chinen learned from Soeishi Sensei.

The tradition of Yamani Ryu was continued by Chogi Kishaba Sensei who was instructed by Masami Chinen Sensei. Chogi Kishaba Sensei was a direct student of Chojun Miyagi Sensei, and who personally introduced his student to his friend Masami Chinen Sensei.

3. Uhuchiku Kobudo

Uhuchiku Kobudo was taught by the Buddhist Sect Shingon of the Monastery Somontosan Dempo, Kyoto, Japan.

On Okinawa, Uhuchiku Kobudo was taught by Shinyu Isa Sensei who was a Buddhist Monk at the Temple of Futenma Kannondo, in Ginowan City.

The roots of the school are in Sanda Kunagusuku (Kinjo Uhuchiku or Kani Usumei). Two prominent teachers are Shosei Kina and Moden Yabiku. Moden Yabiku is of the Ryu Kyu Kobudo.

4. Ryu Kyu Kobudo

The Ryu Kyu Kobudo Hozon was founded by Moden Yabiku Sensei, and was directed by Eisuke Akamine Sensei.

Moden Yabiku Sensei learned Kobudo from Chinen Sanda Sensei of Yamani Ryu, and from Tawata 'Pechin', as well as, from the famous Kanagusuku Sanda Sensei. Shinken Taira Sensei was a Kobudo student of Moden Yabiku Sensei.

Akamine Eisuke Sensei was one of those teachers who sustained that Kobudo was used against the Satsuma Clan, and developed new kata after the invasion of the Clan.

5. Matayoshi Kobudo

Matayoshi Kobudo, as it is commonly known, is officially named Shadan Hojin: Zen Okinawa Kobudo Renmei (Okinawa Federation of Kobudo). It was systematized by the great Shinko Matayoshi Sensei who learned from Gushikawa no Tiragwa (Higa Tanmei) and from Jitude Moshigwa Lire who in turn, was a student of Matsutaru Ire.

The son of Shinko Matayoshi Sensei, Shimpo Matayoshi Sensei, currently heads the organization.

Some great teachers who studied with Matayoshi Shimpo Sensei were: Kenyu Chinen, Seisuke Adaniya, Seikichi Odo, Shinsei Omine, Kenichi Kinjo, Takahashi Kinjo, Shusei Maehiro, and Kanei Katsuyoshi.

Tournament Kobudo Kata Acceptable on Okinawa

NO	型(形)の名称	NO	型(形)の名称
1	徳嶺の棍	14	津堅砂掛の棍
2	佐久川の棍	15	大城の棍
3	周氏の棍	16	津堅の棍
4	趙氏の棍	17	津堅大棍
5	浦添の棍	18	ルーファの棍
6	津堅棒	19	白松の棍
7	米川の棍	20	白太郎の棍
8	北谷屋良の棍	21	公望の棍 ケポーノ
9	知念志喜屋仲の棍	22	カーティンの棍
10	瀬底の棍	23	朝雲の棍
11	添石の棍	24	八双の棍
12	白樺の棍	25	大屯棒
13	祝嶺の棍	26	上原の棍

NO	型(形)の名称	NO	型(形)の名称
1	北谷屋良のサイ	9	サイ (2)
2	浜比嘉のサイ	10	サイ (3)
3	津堅志多伯のサイ	11	ウフチクのサイ
4	繁多川幸良小のサイ	12	渡久山のサイ
5	多和田のサイ	13	石川小のサイ
6	湖城のサイ	14	千原のサイ
7	屋嘉のサイ	15	二丁サイ
8	サイ (1)	16	三丁サイ

APPENDIX 2 Okinawa Kobudo Bo Kata Names

NO	Kata Names	NO	Kata Names
1	TOKUMINE NO KUN	14	CHIKIN SUNAKAKE NO KUN
2	SAKUGAWA NO KUN	15	UFUGUSHIKU NO KUN
3	SHUSHI NO KUN	16	CHIKIN NO KUN
4	SHOSHI NO KUN	17	CHIKIN UFUKUN
5	URASHI NO KUN	18	RUFA NO KUN
6	CHIKIN BO	19	SHIROMATSU NO KUN
7	YONEGAWA NO KUN	20	SHIROTAROU NO KUN
8	CHATAN YARA NO KUN	21	KUBO NO KUN
9	CHINEN SHIYANAKA NO KUN	22	KATIN ^o NO KUN
10	SHIKU NO KUN	23	CHOUN NO KUN
11	SHIISHI NO KUN	24	HASSO NO KUN
12	SHIROTARU NO KUN	25	UFUTUN BO
13	SHUKUMINE NO KUN	26	UEHARA NO KUN

APPENDIX 3 Okinawa Kobudo Sai Kata Names

NO	Kata Names	NO	Kata Names
1	CHATAN YARA NO SAI	9	SAI 2
2	HAMAHIGA NO SAI	10	SAI 3
3	CHIKIN SHITAHAKU NO SAI	11	UFUCHIKU NO SAI
4	HANTAGUWA KORYUWA NO SAI	12	TOKUYAMA NO SAI
5	TAWATA NO SAI	13	ISHIKAWAGUWA NO SAI
6	KUGUSHIKU NO SAI	14	SHINBARU NO SAI
7	YAKA NO SAI	15	NICHO SAI
8	SAI 1	16	SANCHO SAI

It is the duty of coaches and teachers to obtain well in advance the rules and requirements for competitions. As the rules vary from event to event, they are just as important as the technical expertise of the competitors.

Here is one example of a tournament event and the competition requirements:

	種 目 Category	予選型 Preliminary Kata	決勝型 Final Kata
段 の 部 D A N	成年男子(棒の部) Adult Male Bo	佐久川の髷(小) Sakugawa no kun Sho	周氏の髷(大) Shushi no Kon Dai
	成年男子(銀の部) Adult Male Sai	津堅志多伯の銀 Chikenshitahakku no Sai	北谷屋良の銀 Chattanyara no Sai
	少年男子(棒の部) Junior Male Bo	佐久川の髷(小) Sakugawa no kun Sho	周氏の髷(大) Shushi no Kon Dai
	少年男子(銀の部) Junior Male Sai	津堅志多伯の銀 Chikenshitahakku no Sai	北谷屋良の銀 Chattanyara no Sai
	女 子(棒の部) Ladies Bo	佐久川の髷(小) Sakugawa no kun Sho	周氏の髷(大) Shushi no Kon Dai
	女 子(銀の部) Ladies Sai	津堅志多伯の銀 Chikenshitahakku no Sai	北谷屋良の銀 Chattanyara no Sai
級 の 部 K Y U	成年男子(棒の部) Adult Male Bo	佐久川の髷(小) Sakugawa no kun Sho	周氏の髷(大) Shushi no Kon Dai
	成年男子(銀の部) Adult Male Sai	津堅志多伯の銀 Chikenshitahakku no Sai	左 同 Same
	少年男子(棒の部) Junior Male Bo	佐久川の髷(小) Sakugawa no kun Sho	周氏の髷(大) Shushi no Kon Dai
	少年男子(銀の部) Junior Male Sai	津堅志多伯の銀 Chikenshitahakku no Sai	左 同 Same
	女 子(棒の部) Ladies Bo	佐久川の髷(小) Sakugawa no kun Sho	周氏の髷(大) Shushi no Kon Dai
	女 子(銀の部) Ladies Sai	津堅志多伯の銀 Chikenshitahakku no Sai	左 同 Same

Following, are the rules by the World Karate Confederation. Please note that the weight of the Bo for males and females varies by half kilogram.



W K C

WORLD KARATE CONFEDERATION

KOBUDO COMPETITION RULES

2007

KOBUDO competition shall be conducted under guidelines as set forth by the World Karate Confederation (WKC) Executive Committee.

Article 1: Competition Area

1. The competition area must be flat and devoid of hazard.
2. It must be of suitable size to allow the kata to be performed without restriction.
3. Normal Kumite tatami flooring is allowed but sprung wooden flooring is preferred.

Article 2: Judging

1. The Panel of Referee and Judges will be appointed by the Referee Commission.
2. Competitors will demonstrate kata from one of the recognised WKC styles.
3. The Panel will consist of specific style qualified officials in the first instance.
4. A Kata contest will be judged by a Panel of: One Referee and either four or six corner Judges (depending on numbers available).
5. The Kata contest will be run under the instruction of the Referee.
6. Scorekeepers and announcers will be appointed.

Article 3: Organisation of Competition

(No Compulsory KATA shall be required for KOBUDO competition.)

A) Individual

- 1) Individual KOBUDO competitors shall compete in the age and skill divisions as prescribed.
- 2) The individual KOBUDO match consists of individual performance in separate male and female divisions.
- 3) KOBUDO competition shall be based on the same experience level as the KATA or Kumite divisions (Advanced divisions only).
- 4) Individual KOBUDO competition shall also be subdivided into short and long weapons.

B) Team – Team KOBUDO competition shall be conducted in the same manner as in team KATA.



Article 4: Criteria for Decision

In principle, KOBUDO KATA shall be judged using the same criteria as KATA, with the additional criteria that the KOBUDO KATA demonstrates the individual and unique characteristics of the weapon being utilized.

- A) In addition to the criteria of empty hand KATA the loss of control of a weapon (dropping) in competition will be grounds for disqualification. The panel of judges will conclude that the athlete is disqualified and the referee will dismiss the contestant/team with no score given. (Recorders shall mark a zero for that contestant.)
- B) Any weapon or form used may not be such that it can endanger or damage any person or property (i.e., denting or marring of floors, loose handles, etc.)
- C) In KOBUDO, it is acceptable for a contestant to demonstrate dynamic movement rather than a stopped, "weighted down" stance between each movement.
- D) Any manipulation or handling of the weapon that may be construed as dangerous in regards to the safety of all concerned shall not be permitted.

Article 5: Scoring

In principle, KOBUDO KATA shall be scored using the same range and procedure as KATA with the inclusion of the following:

- A) **Loss of control of the weapon**
 - 1) If the contestant momentarily loses a grip of the weapon, .1-.3 points should be deducted.
 - 2) If the weapon touches the floor at any time during the performance, .1-.3 points should be deducted.
 - 3) If the contestant uses a dangerous technique that jeopardizes the safety of the judges or other competitors, disqualification will result.

Article 6: General Information

Only KOBUDO weapons that are authorized and deemed as acceptable by the WKC Executive Committee may be used during competition.

- A) Only the following weapons will be allowed in KOBUDO competition:

LONG WEAPONS

1) BO

- a) Shall be made of hardwood, without tapered ends.
- b) Length shall be within one fist of the top of the competitors head, or fall under one of the standard sizes of 78 inches, 72 inches, 66 inches and 60 inches. In addition, it may not be less than ¾" diameter for competitors 18 years and younger and not less than 1" diameter for ages over 18 years.
- e) The weight for adult male competitors shall be no less than 900g. The weight for female adult competitors shall be no less than 850 g.

**2) EKU (Kai-Bo)**

- a) EKU must be made of hardwood and have a length that shall be within one fist of the top of the competitors head when measured from the floor. In addition
- b) EKU blade shall have a flat side and a rounded or beveled side, and the blade tip may not have a sharp point.
- c) For adult male competitors, the weight of the eku shall be no less than 1200g.
- d) For adult female competitors, the weight of the eku shall be no less than 1100g.

SHORT WEAPONS**3) TONFA (pair)**

- a) TONFA must be entirely made of hardwood with a minimum length, when grasped by the handle, to reach the end of the competitor's elbow.
- b) Two TONFA are used in WKC KOBUDO competition.

4) SAI (pair)

- a) Two Sai's must be used for competitions (Sai Kata's that use one Sai or three Sai's are not allowed).
- b) Must be made of steel
- c) The tip shall in principle extend past the competitor's elbow.
- d) Each Sai shall weigh no less than 360g.
- e) Competitors may roll up their sleeves for Sai Kata.

B) All weapons shall be examined by an official prior to competition to ensure that they are of authentic design, construction, and materials. Any weapon that, in the examiner's opinion, gives an unfair advantage may not be used. Grounds for rejecting a weapon include but are not limited to exceptionally lightweight, coating to improve grip, markings (including different color tones of wood), and non-standard construction.

C) All wood on weapons must be hardwood (oak, teak, mahogany; no rat-tan).

KATA LISTING**BO KATA**

- 1. Tokumine No Kun
- 2. Sakugawa No Kun
- 3. Shushi No Kun
- 4. Shoshi No Kun
- 5. Urashi No Kun
- 6. Chikin Bo
- 7. Yonegawa No Kun
- 8. Chatanyara No Kun
- 9. Chinen Shikyanaka No Kun
- 10. Sesoko No Kun
- 11. Shishi No Kun
- 12. Shirotaru No Kun
- 13. Shukumine No Kun
- 14. Chikin Sunaka No Kun



15. Ufugushiku No Kun
16. Chikin No Kun
17. Chikin Dai Kun
18. Rufa No Kun
19. Shiromatsu No Kun
20. Shirotarou No Kun
21. Kobo No Kun
22. Katin No Kun
23. Choun No Kun
24. Hasso No Kun
25. Ufuton Bo
26. Sueyoshi No Kon
27. Shinakake No Kon
28. Rohai No Kon

TONFU KATA

1. Yaragua no Tonfa
2. Matayoshi no Tonfa
3. Hamahiga no Tonfa

EKU KATA

1. Ten no KATA
2. Chi no KATA
3. Sunakake no Eku-bo
4. Fuyu no Eku-bo

SAI KATA

1. Chatan Yara No Sai
2. Hanagiga No Sai
3. Chikin Shitahaku No Sai
4. Hantagawa Kuraguwa No Sai
5. Tawata No Sai
6. Kugusoku No Sai
7. Yaka No Sai
8. Sai Ichi Nodan
9. Sai Ni Nodan
10. Sai 3
11. Ufuchiku No Sai
12. Tokuyama No Sai
13. Ishikawaguwa No Sai
14. Shibu No Sai
15. Nicho Sai
16. Sancho Sai
17. Tsukenshitahaku No Sai
18. Kishaba No Sai
19. Arakaki No Sai

In contrast, in the United States the Open Tournament Rules are more relaxed. Categories are separate by Long weapon, Short weapon, Chinese weapons (in this case both long and short Chinese weapons are included), Japanese and Okinawa weapons, and the most dazzling of all, Musical Kata weapons. Number of divisions depends on the size of the tournament.

Kobudo Trivia

1. In a competition, is it correct to execute a Bo Kata using a Jo?

Answer: No

2. Do Okinawa Katas with a single Kama exist?

Answer: No they don't.

3. What is the approximate length of a Bo?

Answer: 1.80 Meters

4. In competition, is it permitted to execute a Bo Kata with an aluminum Bo?

Answer: No, it is not permitted.

5. Does Okinawa Kata with a single Tunfa exist?

Answer: No, it does not exist.

6. Which is the oldest Kobudo School of which we do have references?

Answer: Yamani Ryu

7. Was every School of Kobudo created by the peasant classes exclusively?

Answer: No they were not.

8. Which is the oldest Bo kata among Sakugawa no Kun, Shushi no Kun, and Matsu Higa no Kun?

Answer: Sakugawa no Kun.

9. In a traditional Kata, is it normal to throw the weapon in the air?

No, it isn't.

NOTE: This is in reference to the Bo Kata classified as acceptable traditional kata for competitions. Some Sai Kata contains throwing techniques at the conclusion of the kata. A round piece of wood is placed on the floor as the designated target.

10. The fall of a weapon is penalized with a disqualification. In Duo Kata, what if one competitor drops the weapon, while the other competitor does not?

Answer: Both competitors are disqualified.

11. Is it normal that a traditional kata contains movements without Bunkai?

Answer: No, it is not.

12. What is the minimum weight requirement for a Bo to be used in competition?

Answer: 900 grams.

13. Is it possible for a Bo to have ends thinner than the rest of the Bo?

Answer: Yes, it is possible.

14. Should a kata begin and end at the exact same spot?

Answer: No they do not need to start and end at the same spot. However, if there is a Duo Kata performance, both competitors need to finish identically.

15. Can the movements of a Bo kata be the same with the movements of an Eiku kata?

Answer: No they cannot. For practice, one can execute an Eiku kata with a Bo, but not in competition.

16. Is imbalance penalized?

Answer: Yes, it is.

17. Is a competitor penalized for looking to the ground?

Answer: Yes, the competitor is penalized.

18. Is Katana considered a Kobudo's weapon?

Answer: No, it is not.

19. Are there different measurements of Sai?

Answer: Yes, there are.

20. Can a plastic or metallic Jo be used for a kata completion?

Answer: No, it cannot.

21. What is the approximate length of a Jo?

Answer: 1.30 Meters.

22. Can a plastic Sai be used in a Sai Kata competition?

Answer: No, it cannot. Sai are always metal.

23. Can talc powder be used?

Answer: No, talc powder cannot be used.

24. Is there Chinese influence in Kobudo's kata?

Answer: Yes, there is.

25. Is the School of Matayoshi Kobudo the oldest?

Answer: No, it is not.

26. In the event of a draw, what must the competitors do?

Answer: Perform a different kata.

27. When a competitor indicates a little doubt, how it must be penalized?

Answer: Penalties are listed and explained in tournament rules... read them carefully.

28. Can plastic Tunfa be used?

Answer: No. Only wooden Tunfa may be used.

29. Is it compulsory to wear a white Karate Gi in completion?

Answer: No, it is not. However, the competitor needs to find out what is the permitted color of the Karate Gi for that particular competition.

30. Is Naginata a traditional Okinawan weapon?

Answer: No, it is not.

31. Does Kumite Kata exist?

Answer: Yes, Kumite Kata exists. They are known as Bo vs. Sai Bunkai, Bo vs. Bo Bunkai, among others. In the dojos Kendo Gear or ingeniously handmade gear for protection and used by practitioners to engage in free style Kumite.

32. Why does Kobudo look like dancing?

Answer: To hide its offensive character.

33. Among Yamani Ryu, Hoshin Ryu, and Motobu Ryu, which school reserved their teachings strictly for family members?

Answer: Yamani Ryu.

34. Are feet positions relevant in Kobudo?

Answer: Yes, they are just as important as the movements.

35. Do all the kata have a stipulated rhythm?

Answer: No, it depends on the school, and on the interpretation of the movement(s).

36. Did Matayoshi create any Kobudo kata?

Answer: No, he did not. He only adopted the kata that he learned.

37. Are there different types of Eiku kata?

Answer: Yes there are.

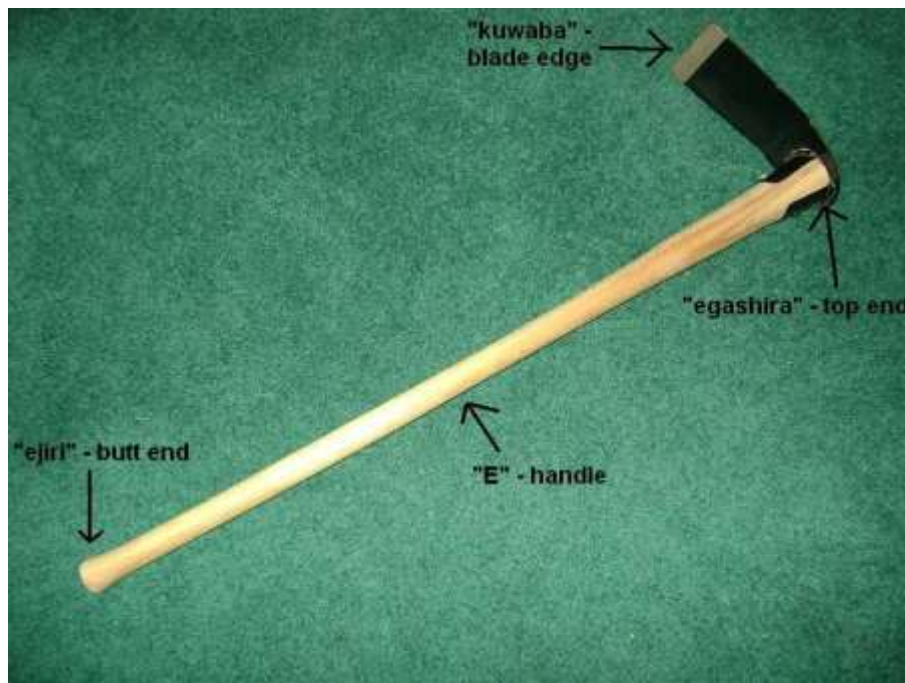
38. Would we consider a traditional kata with continuous jumps and turns?

Answer: No, we would not.

39. Which kata would be considered as the best between a kata with a little imbalance and a kata without strength?

Answer: The first kata would be the winner.

40. Does Matayoshi have a Kuwa Kata?



Answer: Yes he did study the Kuwa.

41. What is the minimum number of movements in a Kobudo Kata?

Answer: There is no set number of movements.

42. Can an Artistic Kata lack Bunkai?

Answer: No. An Artistic Kata must have its own Bunkai.

43. How do we evaluate an Artistic Kata?

Answer: We evaluate the kata based on speed, acrobatic movements, and correct techniques.

44. Do the weapons of an Artistic Kata need to have special characteristics?

Answer: No they do not.

45. Which of the following reasons explain appropriately the origin of Kobudo?

- a. Kobudo was created by the military for fighting against the abuses of the Satsuma Clan.
- b. Kobudo was created by the peasants to defend themselves against criminals and bandits.

46. Answer: Both of the above two reasons are possible.

47. Are there kicks in a traditional Kobudo Kata?

Answer: No, there are no kicks in traditional Kobudo Kata.

48. Is the Shikodachi stance in Ryu Kyu Kobudo different from the Karate Shikodachi stance?

Answer: Yes, it is.

49. Is the Kobudo Neko Ashi stance different from that in Shotokan, Shito Ryu, Japanese Goju Ryu and Wado Ryu?

Answer: Yes it is. All of Neko Ashi stances are different from modern karate styles.

50. Who is considered the Father of Ryu Kyu Kobudo?

Answer: Taira Shinken.

Handmade weapons are prized possessions! It takes a long time and hard work in order to create a Bo, but it is better than a purchased one from a manufacturer. One's soul is tied to the weapon... but that is a chapter for a different book.



Kamiunten Eisho, the oldest living weapons maker at that time, ensured a perfect fit!
October 26th, 1993



If not handmade, there is always SHUREIDO... global meeting place of all karateka... on Okinawa...