



KAZOKU

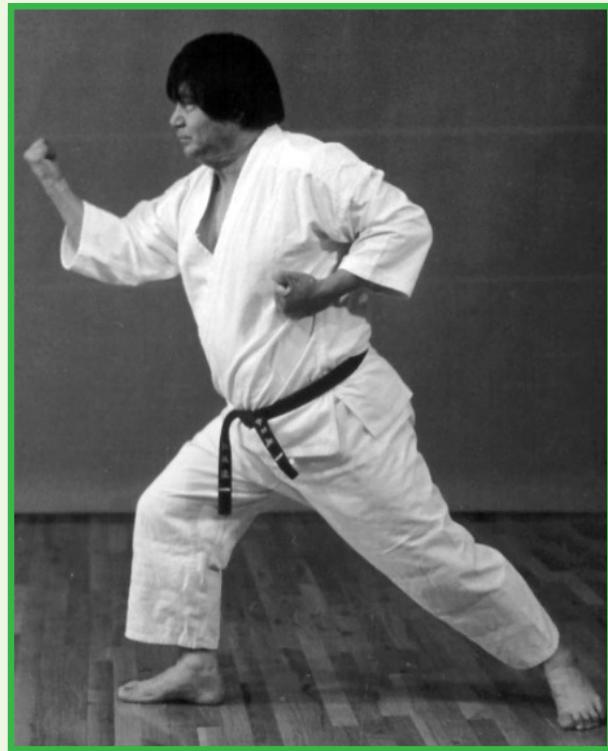
Different Kata

By Jerry Figgiani

A Recently, I viewed some of the top practitioners in Matsubayashi Shorin Ryu doing kata on YouTube. All of these practitioners were all out of the Grandmaster Shoshin Nagamine's dojo in Okinawa. They all performed the same kata, but they all performed the kata differently. Was there a change in the kata? Did they leave something out? Of course, the answer is no. This is something I tell my students all the time. Just as each person has their own signature, no two people can perform kata the same way. All of us have different body types. Who has more flexibility? Who has a balance problem or some other physical limitation? This will all affect the outcome of the kata being performed. What also affects the kata is emotions and time.

The emotions one feels during the course of their training changes from day to day. Do we go into the dojo each day with the same emotions? Of course not! Performing kata with different emotional states will affect us. This is why it is so important to clear our mind when performing any task. Someone getting ready for a Shodan or any other Dan ranking, will be performing their Kata at a more focused pace than someone who is just finding the angles and direction that is new to them.

Then there is time. As in anything in life, as we age, we change. The speed and power will not be there as it once was. People need to embrace this fact, rather than becoming frustrated over it. With time, performing kata, more adjustments may be needed. It could be to slow the kata down or adjust the stance for better balance. These adjustments can help the maturing student perform their kata with satisfaction. One of the most important points I have received in my study, is that you have to make karate your own. You have to be able to make the techniques feel comfortable to your body type. If confronted with a realistic situation this will help you rather than hinder you. So embrace the fact that



your Kata does not have to look the same as everyone else. I once had someone from my own style say to me "Your Kata does not look like my instructor's." His instructor was about 5'7 and 145 pounds. I am 5'10 and 225 pounds. My answer to him was simply "I hope not." The instructor who once moved with speed and power in front of his students will change as well. Enjoy your Kata training and remember it is not just performing the movements. Besides being a link to the past, discover the throws, joint locks, chokes and so much more the Kata gives us.

Grand Master Shoshin Nagamine stated "Even after many years, Kata practice is never finished, for there is always something new to be learned about executing a movement." Enjoy being different ! 

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