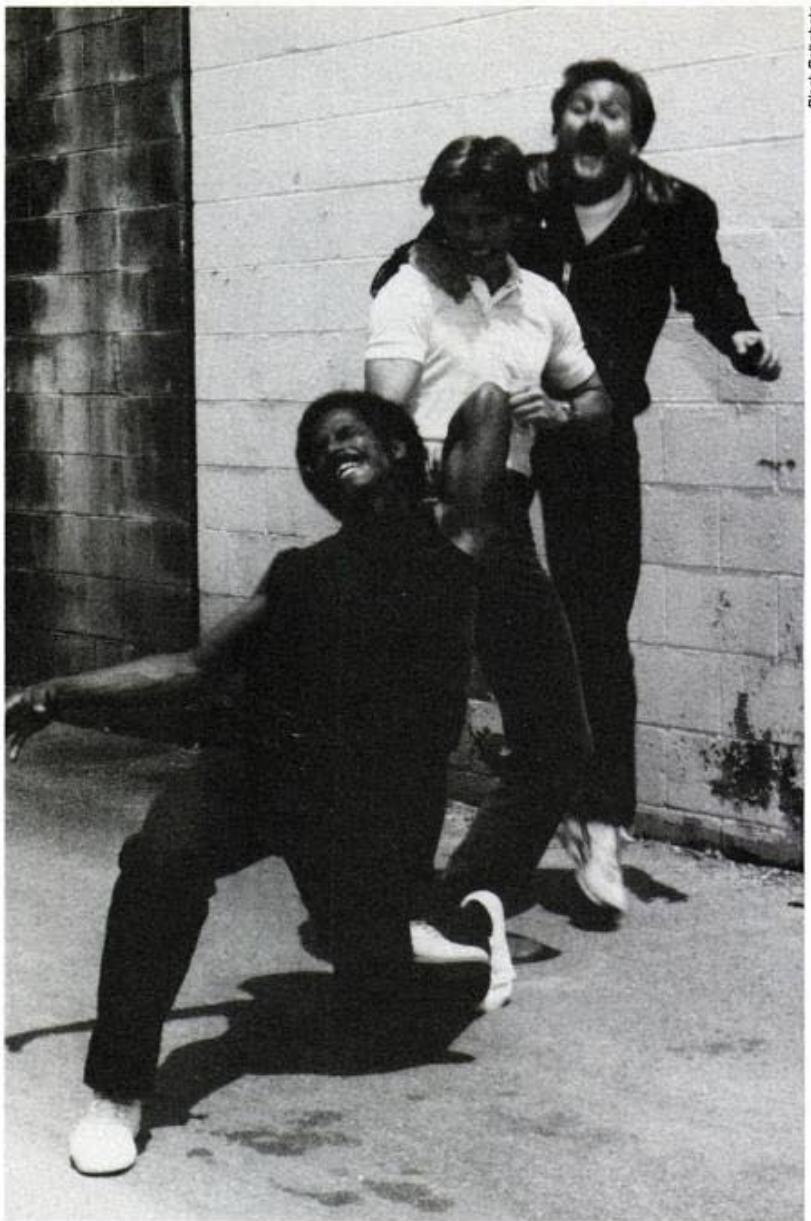


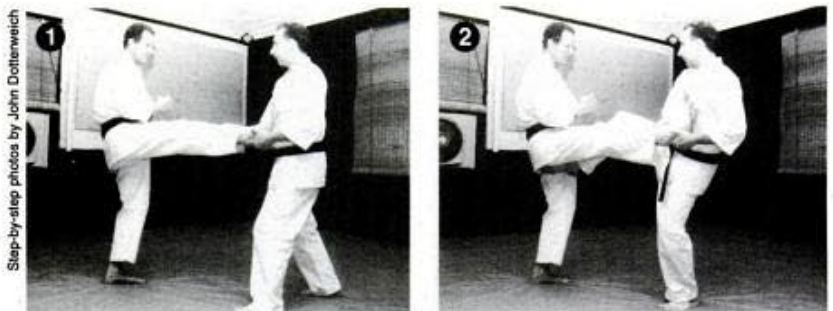
Traditional Okinawan *goju-ryu* karate is comprised of movements that were developed strictly for practical self-defense. Rather than relying on acrobatic, flashy kicks and punches, *goju-ryu* concentrates on direct, efficient techniques that are intended to disable an opponent as quickly as possible. The defender skilled in *goju-ryu* executes blocks, strikes, locks and takedowns from a well-balanced power base, and maintains complete control of the situation.

*Goju-ryu* karate was founded by Chojun Miyagi, who died in 1953 at age 65. Miyagi was a student of *naha-te* instructor Kanryo Higashionna while on Okinawa, but later traveled to China's Fukien Province for additional martial arts study. Upon returning to Okinawa in 1917, Miyagi formulated a theory of practical karate and organized it into both an educational subject and an art of self-defense to be taught in schools, recreational centers, and police academies.

In examining *naha-te* and the material he learned while in China, Miyagi discovered that the traditional method of training to kill an opponent with one strike was not entirely suited for modern educational establishments. Miyagi therefore developed a system that combined both "hard" and "soft" movements. He created the softer breathing *kata* (training sequence) *sanchin* and combined it with harder forms such as *tensho*, then supplemented them with calisthenics to strengthen the body. Miyagi also developed the first two *gekisai* forms for beginners. In this way, Miyagi's karate was a three-pronged practice: self-defense, an exercise for physical and spiritual development, and an educational subject. He adopted the title *goju-ryu* (meaning "hard/soft system"), thus becoming the first Okinawan karate master to identify an art by a name unrelated to the name of the city in which the art was practiced.



Black Belt photo



Step-by-step photos by John Dottenweich

# STREETFIGHTIN' C

**Combat Techniques That Will Give the Bad Guy a Bad Time**



### Training Theory

Although goju-ryu is basically a close-range combat system, students are taught to defend against both long and short attacks. In theory, the soft (*ju*) movements of goju are often employed to set up or draw an opponent into a range where the harder (*go*) techniques can be utilized. Years of constant practice enable the goju-ryu stylist to effectively employ the *kaisai* (practical applications) of the classical kata against both armed and unarmed assailants.

Goju-ryu karate students develop the proper attitude for self-defense through diligent training of both the mind and body. According to Miyagi, "Karate is not to be stiff as a steel bar, but to be relaxed, always training your body and mind, prepared for a sudden attack." It is this attitude that gives the goju-ryu student the framework to develop confidence and self-discipline, along with the awareness to avoid physical confrontations whenever possible.

Authentic, traditional goju-ryu can be found throughout the United States, including at Porta's Karate-Do Academy in Pompton Lakes, New Jersey. John Porta, who founded the school in 1966, studied under Masanobu Shinjo, president of the All-Okinawan Goju-Kai and the All-Okinawan Karate-Do Association.

The principles set forth by Porta are identical to those practiced by the early



*Goju-ryu karate's seipai form contains movements which allow the defender to block (1) an opponent's punch and counter with a wrist lock/elbow strike combination (2). Continuing with moves from the form, the defender then applies (3) an arm lock by pressuring the opponent's elbow joint.*

Okinawan masters. Training concentrates on street defense rather than sparring in keeping with goju-ryu's de-emphasis on sports competition. Students are firmly rooted in the most valuable and effective movements in the classical kata. To be successful, the student must learn proper technique by perfecting kata and having a complete awareness of positioning. Even the slightest deviation in hand, foot or body position can render a technique ineffective. Kata is like a dictionary; it is a catalog of techniques for practical self-defense and requires dedicated practice.

### Street Defense

Goju-ryu emphasizes infighting techniques, meaning it is well-suited for the street, where most encounters involve close-range tactics. Goju-ryu's infighting techniques are generally directed against vulnerable, vital areas of the opponent's body. The intent is to take the attacker out in a quick, efficient manner.

At close range, the goju-ryu stylist reacts to an opponent's physical threat by blocking and trapping the assailant's



striking limb, then drawing him into a range for a strike or locking technique. Blocking is generally performed in circular motions that can be quickly turned into grabs or locks that immobilize the opponent and set up other techniques. Kicks are delivered with the heel, toe, instep, or ball of the foot to vulnerable areas of the opponent's lower body. All parts of the hand can be utilized for striking; finger pokes, knifehand and ridgehand strikes, and single- and double-knuckle punches are all common goju-ryu techniques.

Goju-ryu karate contains many variations of blocking an opponent's lead hand and following up with a kick to the lower body. One of these variations is found in the *kururunfa* kata: The opponent's punch or grab is blocked, allowing for an immediate counterkick to the knee of the lead leg. Goju-ryu's *seisan* kata contains movements for blocking and immediately striking with the same lead hand, leaving the opponent vulnerable to additional strikes with the free hand.

The *seipai* kata includes an excellent street defense against a right-hand punch. From a right-foot-forward cat stance (*migi neko ashi dachi*), the punch is deflected with a right open-hand block. The defender then shifts position and steps forward while grabbing and maintaining control of the opponent's right wrist. The goju-ryu stylist delivers a left elbow strike



*In goju-ryu's sanseiru form, the practitioner learns a method of defending against an opponent's kick. The defender blocks, then grabs (1) the kick and counters (2) with a front kick to the groin. He finishes (3) by twisting the leg and taking the opponent down.*

# GOJU-RYU KARATE

by Jack McCabe

JANUARY 1993 / BLACK BELT

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A movement from goju-ryu's seisan form allows the defender to block (1) an opponent's punch and strike (2) with the same hand to the attacker's throat, leaving the defender's other hand free for a follow-up technique.

(empi uchi) to the opponent's head or behind his jaw, and follows up with a left arm lock behind his attacker's right elbow joint. A variation of this lock can be executed by applying pressure to a vital point on the opponent's upper arm near the triceps.

Goju-ryu also includes effective defenses against an opponent's kick. The shisochin kata includes a block and hooking grab that neutralizes the opponent's kicking leg. The goju-ryu stylist then follows up with a palm strike to

the chin. In the sanseiru kata, goju-ryu stylists are taught to counter a right front kick by blocking with a scooping, sweeping motion of the left hand that catches the opponent's leg. The leg is held tightly at the defender's left side before he delivers a quick, forceful kick between the opponent's legs. The defender then twists to the outside while pushing downward on the knee of the trapped leg, taking the opponent to the ground.

This takedown, along with the elbow strike from the seipai kata, illustrates some of the "hidden" movements contained in classical goju-ryu kata. These techniques may not be obvious to the beginner or intermediate student as they practice the forms, but with proper instruction, practitioners can learn to utilize these



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effective movements when defending themselves on the street. Through diligent kata practice, students also learn to recognize openings in the opponent's defenses and react instinctively in the most efficient manner.

Follow-up techniques are an important part of goju-ryu karate. An opponent who has been downed may attempt to rise and continue his attack. It is therefore imperative that the defender be completely sure the attack has been terminated. Goju-ryu follow-up maneuvers include stomping and kicking techniques, as well as locks.

#### The Ultimate Goal

Although the goju-ryu practitioner will go to any length to defeat an opponent, his primary aim is the attainment of in-

*In goju-ryu karate's shisochin form, the defender learns to sidestep, deflect and grab (1) an opponent's kick, then follow up (2) with a palm-heel smash to the chin that leads to a takedown technique.*

ner peace through the building of self-esteem and self-discipline. The true martial artist is one who is not afraid to look inside and examine personal shortcomings, and then correct them. The ultimate goal of goju-ryu is to avoid fighting whenever possible, yet possess an awareness of who you are and in which direction you are going.

*About the author: Jack McCabe is a Wayne, New Jersey-based martial artist and freelance writer.*

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