

Naihanchi's Mook Jong Drills – Karate's Hidden Wooden Dummy Techniques

By

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Naihanchi or Tekki kata is one of several traditional Chinese-Okinawan karate katas whose origins have been lost over the centuries. While the Naihanchi kata is a relatively short kata with regards to the number of techniques and the amount of repetition contained within, it also possesses a large number of possible combative applications. It is for this reason that many traditional karate stylists are giving their traditional katas a closer look. It is through this closer scrutiny of their individual katas that many karate stylists have made several important discoveries. That many of Karate's empty-hand katas have direct application(s) not only to grappling, pressure point striking, and weapons, but also for use with a Mook Jong, or Wooden Dummy.

The idea of performing one's kata against a wooden dummy is not new. In fact, it is commonly used throughout many different styles of Chinese martial arts. The same also applies to other styles of martial arts that use free swinging or fixed heavy bags, as well as makiwara training for arm and leg conditioning. However, what is new is the increased interest in finding the hidden combat applications within a kata: grappling/jujitsu/chin-na, pressure-point strikes, and weapons applications. As interest continues to grow it is feasible that not only mook jong applications but also two-man katas as well could also be invented, or re-invented. The main focus of this text is to illustrate how one of the Naihanchi katas—Naihanchi shodan—can be adapted to a mook jong or wooden dummy.

One of the main features that make Naihanchi a good choice for mook-jong training is due to the limited number of changes in posture and body position. Primarily, there is no 90' degree, 180' degree, or 270' degree turns in its pattern of foot movement (i.e. walking). The Naihanchi exponent generally faces forward, with only minor changes in direction. While the head and arms may turn to focus in a left or right direction, the karate stylist's body almost always faces forward. This makes it easier to directly apply the different blocks, strikes, and kicks against a stationary target; i.e. a mook-jong.

When using a mook-jong as a training tool one must always try to remember that wooden dummy training attempts to simulate an actual opponent. Traditionally, many of the hand and foot techniques used in Naihanchi are performed with a single technique rhythm: i.e. 1-block, 2-punch, 3-kick, etc. However, when training with the mook-jong, the Naihanchi exponent cannot always follow the traditional flow-pattern/rhythm. Often times, the blocking and striking arms and hands along with the sweeping and kicking legs and feet need to be combined together to get the proper feel of using Naihanchi against a wooden dummy. Therefore, many of the hand and foot techniques need to be combined into an altogether different training pattern/rhythm.

Some traditionalists may believe that the use of the mook-jong may fatally alter their originally perceived ideas concerning Naihanchi kata. However, it does allow the karate stylist a better opportunity in understanding how different striking, kicking, as well as trapping or sticking hand and leg movements can exist within their kata. These same trapping or sticking hand and leg techniques make it easier to apply the many different joint-locks and throws against a real opponent.

Within this text, there is no specific style of Naihanchi Kata (i.e. Shotokan, Shorin-ryu, Shito-Ryu, etc) mentioned. The essential idea of this article is to try and illustrate an otherwise

obscure application of Naihanchi. Also, the intention of applying an empty-hand kata to a mook-jong requires the Naihanchi exponent to make slight modifications when applying the individual techniques in sequence against a wooden dummy. While the rhythm of movement may change slightly, the overall level of application(s) should increase.

The mook-jong or wooden dummy being used within the photos is called an Exo-Dummy. This is a variation of the traditional wooden dummy in that it can be used as an accessory to a free standing punching bag.

In the first movements of the Naihanchi Kata, the hands cross and overlap one another.



#1



This helps the student see the potential for an x-block technique with the top hand blocking high, while the bottom hand blocks low. This would be a type of X-block. Most X-blocks focus on either the left side or the right side. However, this initial movement uses a dual inward blocking motion (i.e. both hands are blocking towards the center, from the outside in).



#2



Immediately following, a cross-over step is the same as a sweeping leg technique, or sticky leg maneuver. Here the top foot can be used to either trap or sweep an opponent's lead leg.



#3



After the cross-over step, the arms change blocking positions. This would be the 2nd X-block. Here both hands are primarily blocking to the right side.



#4



Next, the low blocking hand executes an inward elbow strike.



#5



After the elbow strike, a follow-thru movement flows into a cross-body chamber. This is the same as a low block.



#6

From the cross-body chamber there is a low block, combined with a mid-level strike to the opponent's torso. This would also be a type of X-block where one hand deflects, while the other strikes.



#7

This same striking action can also be the 3rd X-Block. However, the blocking action is to the left side.



#7A

Here the X-block can also serve as a simultaneous block-strike combination.



#8

After the mild-level strike, a second cross-over step is executed. Here the top foot can again be used to either trap or sweep an opponent's lead leg.



#9



After the cross-over step, a high-low block/strike combination is executed. This would be the 4th X-block.



#10



This movement then repeats itself again with the reversing of the hand positions. This would be the 5th X-block. In either case, both the top hand and the bottom hand can execute a strike to the opponent's head or torso while simultaneously blocking his punch.



#11



After the second two-hand blocking motion, the top hand executes a strike to your opponent's head.



#12



In this next sequence, a combination two-hand block and leg sweep is executed on the left side. Here the top hand executes an outward block. This would be the 6th X-block.



#13



Here the sweeping leg technique is reversed while the top hand executes an inward block. This would be the 7th X-block.



#14



After the inward block, you again execute a two-hand outward block. Here again, the X-block is repeated for the 8th time.



#15



In this next sequence, your outside arm executes an inward forearm block. This is also another variation on the X-block. This is the 9th repetition.



#16



Here, the top hand draws back in a chambering motion for an inward elbow strike.



#17



After the elbow strike, the Naihanchi kata repeats itself on the opposite side.

It is quite obvious that when applying what some believe to be a traditional Okinawan or Japanese kata to a mook jong, there is a distinct Chinese martial influence within the Naihanchi kata. This is mainly due to the highly repetitive number of leg sweeps, as well as X-block hand combinations that are present in the Naihanchi mook jong drills. These same close quarter combat techniques are also heavily emphasized in many other Southern Chinese martial arts styles. Some possible Chinese “cousins” of the Naihanchi kata may be: Wing Chun, Jook Lum-Southern Mantis, Pak Mei-White Eyebrow, and Pai Ho-White Crane to name a few. Each of these styles is well known for its close quarter combat emphasis.

In the near future, it may also be possible to discover other types of “hidden” martial applications within other traditional katas like Sanchin, Tensho, Kusanku, Bassai, Gojushiho, etc. through the use of a mook jong/wooden dummy.

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