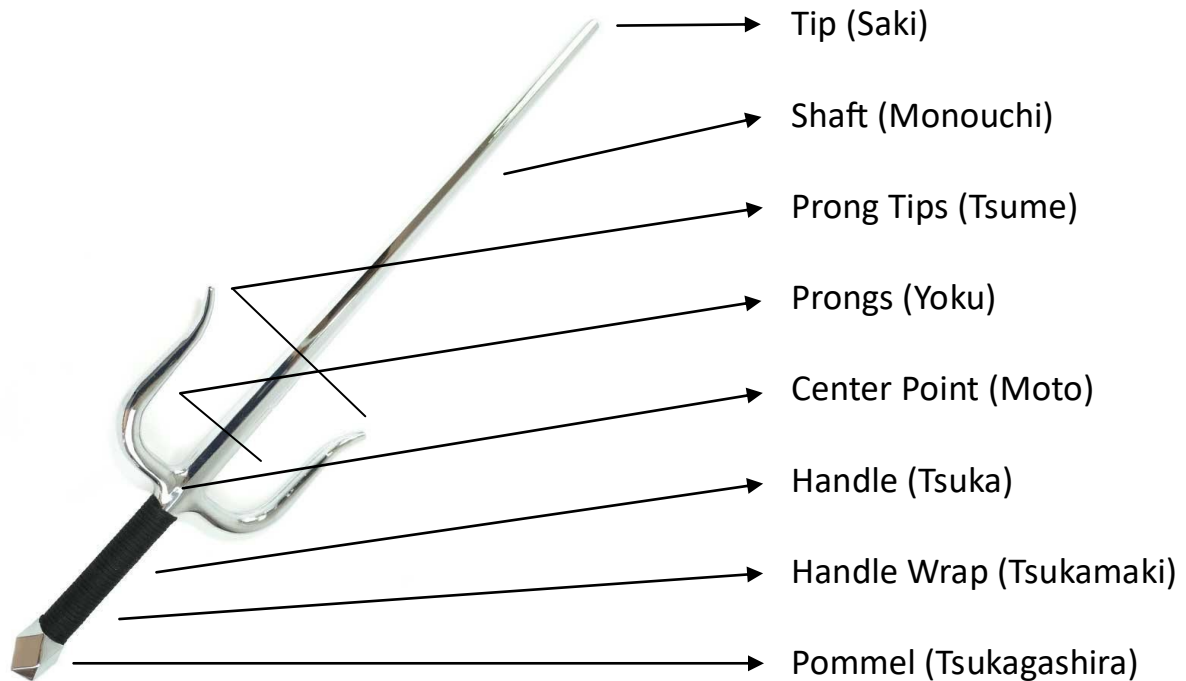


# American Open Way of the Sai

## Parts of the Sai



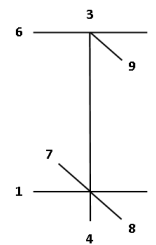
## History of the Sai

During the Japanese occupation of Okinawa, invading warlords prohibited the use of ordinary weapons such as the sword or spear. So the Okinawans turned to karate and kobu-do (the use of karate weapons such as the bo, nunchaku, tonfa, kama, eku, and sai) for protection. Some Kobu-do weapons were farm implements which the ingenious farmers converted into effective protective devices. For instance, the sai (short sword) was dragged through the soil by one peasant, while another would plant seed in the resulting furrow. If approached by a marauding samurai, the sai (pronounced “sigh”) doubled as a weapon with which the peasant could counter a sword attack. Usually the peasant employed two sai, one for each hand, and would conceal a third sai inside the obi (belt), which even a proficient sai artist may have found cumbersome when engaging in battle with a talented swordsman. Thus the third sai was actually used to throw at the warrior. This maneuver was often the key to winning the encounter.

## History of American Open Sai

American Open Sai techniques have been influenced by many martial art pioneers and masters such as Jerry Piddington, Fumio Demura, Tadashi Yamashita, Thomas LaPuppet, Devorah Yoshiko Dometrich, Vitus Bilkling, Ridgely Abele, Robert Bowles, and Robert Trias (Father of American Karate). The American Open Pivot Form with Sai and American Open Way of Sai 1 & 2 with both of these kata performed together called, *American Open Three Spears of Death*, parallel with many movements of American Open empty-hand kata, such as Pivot Form, H-patterns, Lion Form, Sun Form, and Moon Form. The American Open Sai Kata provide a platform of kihon (basics) to springboard the karate-ka into some of the traditional Okinawan kobu-do (weapon) kata such as Yakaa no Sai, Chatan Yara no Sai, and Chikin Shitahaku no Sai.

# American Open Sai Kata 1



## Salutation

Chamber both sai in right (closed) chamber position in attention stance and bow, reach across left and grab top sai, step out left to shoulder stance (open) sun salutation to (closed) fold position, cross down and set hips to prepare position.

1. [H-Pattern 1] Look left, step back left and pivot left (1/4 turn) to forward stance and left (closed) down block/hook/jab lead, right lunge (closed) middle thrust. Shift back to crane stance and right downward flip/(stomp) stab back to forward stance, right (closed) down block, shift back to crane stance and lead left, right (closed) middle thrust back to forward stance, **(1st) Kiai!** (Direction 1 to left)
2. Turn right, step behind right (1/2 turn) to forward stance and right (closed) down block/hook/jab lead, left lunge (closed) middle thrust. Shift back to crane stance and left downward flip/(stomp) stab back to forward stance, left (closed) down block, shift back to crane stance and lead right, left (closed) middle thrust back to forward stance. (Direction 2 to right)
3. [White Crane] Left (open) sideward down block to rear crane stance looking left, pivot left (1/4) turn and left (closed) down block to forward stance and rear-slide reverse punch to short forward stance, lead left and push-slide (closed) front punch to shiko dachi. (Direction 3 to front)
4. Right (open) sideward down block to rear crane stance looking right, pivot right (1/4) turn and right closed down block to forward stance and rear-slide reverse punch to short forward stance, lead right and push-slide (closed) front punch to shiko dachi. (Direction 4 to rear)
5. [Tiger Forms] Step across right and turn (1/2 turn) to left defensive forward stance and left in block (covering center) to right high/left low (closed) tiger form blocks. Step back left and turn (1/2 turn) to right defensive forward stance and right in block (covering center) to left high/right low (closed) tiger form blocks. (Direction 3 back to front)

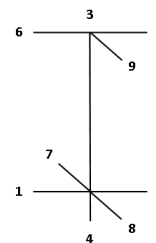
[Double Strikes] Step right to forward stance and (open) high x-block/double inward strikes to head/double (closed) down blocks. Rear-leg changebody front kick to forward stance and double (open) middle spear thrusts back to double (closed) down blocks. Rear-leg changebody front kick to forward stance and double (open) stabs to eyes, **Second Kiai.** Double (closed) fold position to open stance.

6. [Left Pivot Form] Look right, step behind left (3/4 turn) to forward stance and double (closed) right high/left low block, pivot right (1/4 turn) to defensive forward stance and left (closed) down block/right (closed) high chamber, pivot back left (1/4 turn) stepping up right to cat stance and (closed) reinforced inward/circle down hooking outward block. (Direction 5 to right)

Short step up right to rear crane stance and right (open) overhead down strike (shifting forward), short step back left to front crane stance and left (closed) lead (shifting backward)/push-slide middle spear thrust to forward stance.

Step across right to side horse stance and right (closed) double inward elbow strike/backhand flip, right down (closed) block to right front crane stance, left (closed) lead and push-slide right (closed) middle thrust back to forward stance, right (open) overhead inward strike back to forward stance.

# American Open Sai Kata 1



7. [Right Pivot Form] Step behind right (1/2 turn) to forward stance and double (closed) left high/right low block, pivot left (1/4 turn) to defensive forward stance and right (closed) down block/left (closed) high chamber, pivot back right (1/4 turn) stepping up left to cat stance and (closed) reinforced inward/circle down hooking outward block. (Direction 6 to left)

Short step up left to rear crane stance and left (open) overhead down strike (shifting forward), short step back right to front crane stance and right (closed) lead (shifting backward)/push-slide middle spear thrust to forward stance.

Step across left to side horse stance and left (closed) double inward elbow strike/backhand flip, left down (closed) block to left front crane stance, right (closed) lead and push-slide left (closed) middle thrust back to forward stance, left (open) overhead inward strike back to forward stance.

8. [Shutos] Look left, slide left (1/4 turn) to left cat stance and (open) low x-block, step up right to back stance and circle left to right (open) outward reinforced shuto strike, right (outward wrist roll) downward flip to right crane stance, left (open) lead and right (open) middle spear thrust to back stance. (Direction 4 back to rear)

Slide in to right cat stance and (open) low x-block, step left to back stance and circle to left (open) outward reinforced shuto strike, left (outward wrist roll) downward strike (*or throw*) to left crane stance and right (open) lead, left (open) middle spear thrust to back stance.

Double (closed) fold position and step up right back stance and right (closed) circle down outward reinforced shuto strike, low front leaning stance cover and left (open) spear thrust to ground, (1st) kill (*or retrieve sai*).

9. [Shooting Stars] Step up left feet together (1/2 turn) and double (open) spears at 45° shooting star position (cleaning sai), look left and step left to side horse stance and left (open) downward reinforced shuto block circling (clockwise) full circle to downward reinforced left (open) shuto block shifting to left bow and arrow stance. (Direction 1 back to left)

10. Look right and right (open) downward reinforced shuto block (opposite side) back to side horse stance and full circle left (counter clockwise) to right (open) downward reinforced shuto block shifting to right bow and arrow stance. (Direction 2 back to right)

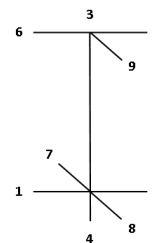
11. [Sanchin] Slide in left (feet together) and double (closed) fold position, extend both arms out to sides (closed) position. Step up left to sanchin stance and circle double (closed) right inward/left downward/left outward hooking block to double vertical chambers and (exhale with tension) double (closed) U-punch with right on top middle/left on bottom low thrusts. (Direction 3 back to front)

## Ending Salutation

Step up right to prepare shoulder stance (closed) crossing arms to fold position, sun salutation (open) to (closed) crossing arms to fold position setting hips to prepare shoulder stance, reach across left and place sai on top with both sai in right (closed) chamber position stepping in right to attention stance and bow.

or continue with American Open Sai Kata 2 called *American Open Three Spears of Death*.

## American Open Sai Kata 2



### Salutation

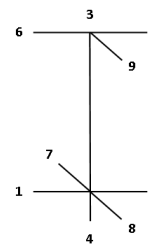
Chamber both sai in right (closed) chamber position in attention stance and bow, reach across left and grab top sai, step out left to shoulder stance (open) sun salutation to (closed) fold position, cross down and set hips to prepare position.

1. [Sanchin] Step right to sanchin stance and double (closed) outward hooking blocks. (Direction 3)
2. [Bow & Arrow] Look left, step left 45° to front crane stance and double (closed) outward hooking blocks, rear-leg front kick (ball of foot) to front crane stance, step back right 45° to left bow & arrow stance and double left down/right out (closed) blocks, left side crane stance and left (open) down block, left (closed) down block back to left bow & arrow stance. (Direction 8 to top left angle)
3. Look right, (1/2 turn) to 45° left bow & arrow stance and double right down/left out (closed) blocks, right side crane stance and right (open) down block, right (closed) down block back to right bow & arrow stance. (Direction 9 to bottom right angle)
4. [H-Pattern 2] Left (closed) inward block/right (closed) circle outward block and pivot push-slide right (open) reverse middle spear thrust to forward stance (back to center), left (closed) lead/right front kick, left (closed) down block, right (closed) chamber back to left open stance, pivot push-slide right (closed) reverse middle thrust to forward stance, **(3rd) Kiai!** (Direction 3 back to front)

[Leopard Form] Drop (closed) to side. Keep sai (closed) for hooking blocks (*or drop sai to sides sliding to reverse grip*). Left inward, right circle outward hooking blocks dropping to left leopard stance and changebody front kick to right forward stance, right inward, left circle outward hooking blocks dropping to right dragon stance and changebody roundhouse kick to left forward stance, left inward, right circle outward hooking blocks dropping to left leopard stance and changebody front kick to right front crane flipping sai inward (*or slide and flip back to normal grip*) and double (open) roundhouse cross strike to eyes (right on top) to right forward stance, **(4th) Kiai!**

5. [Lion Form] Slide left (1/2 turn) to cat stance and (open) left guard/right high chamber, left (open) high block/right (open) inward strike to temple, left inverted stomp and right high changebody front kick, step behind left to cross-legged dragon stance and left (open) high check, right (open) circle down strike to head. (Direction 4 to rear)
6. Look left double (closed) crossing down blocks setting hips, step left (1/2 turn) to long bo stance and left (closed) high block, right (closed) low inward hook to leg pulling left foot in to side peacock stance crossing left (open) low block/right (open) high out block behind head. (Direction 3 back to front)  
[Bassai] Open left foot, double (closed) fold position changebody inside crescent foot block (1/2 turn) to side horse stance and double (closed) elbow strikes/double (open) backhand strikes to both sides, step behind left to cross-legged dragon stance and double (open) down strikes to both sides.
7. [Sun & Moon] Look left double (closed) crossing down blocks setting hips, step left to cat stance and left (open) overhead downward strike/flip to (closed) outward block (setting hips), right inside crescent/side kick to side horse stance and right (open) backhand flip to head. (Direction 4 back to rear)

## American Open Sai Kata 2



8. Look left, step left to cat stance (1/2 turn) and left (open) overhead downward strike (*or throw*)/flip to (closed) outward block (setting hips), step right to side horse stance and right (closed) upward elbow strike/inward/outward (rhino) elbow strikes to inward (wing) elbow block and backhand flip to head, (retreat) back to left side rear crane stance, (re-enter) push-slide back to horse stance and right (closed) hook punch to head, **(5th) Kiai!** (Direction 3 back to front)

Pivot right to low front leaning stance and right (open) outward flip cover, left (open) slow spear thrust to ground, (2nd) kill (or retrieve sai), pivot back to side horse stance and double (open) crossing down blocks (cleaning sai).

9. [Spinning Crane] Spin left (back to front) to right front crane stance and double (open) high x-block/high double (open) inward strikes to forward stance/double (closed) down blocks, (stomp) double (closed) middle thrust/(stomp) double (open) spear to eyes, **(6th) Kiai!**

Double (closed) fold position to open stance, right (closed) high inward block/left (closed) downward block, left (closed) upward block/right (closed) downward block.

10. [Spinning Sumo] Spin left (from 12:00 to 4:30) to 45° shiko dachi and double (open) spears to ground, (3rd) and final kill, **(7th) Kiai!** (Direction 9 back to bottom right angle)

11. [Crane Poses] Step right to side crane stance and left (closed) high block/right (closed) low block looking 45° right. Step down right to left side crane stance and right (closed) high block/left (closed) low block looking 45° left. (Direction 3 back to front)

### Ending Salutation

Step out left to prepare shoulder stance (closed) crossing arms to fold position, sun salutation (open) to (closed) crossing arms to fold position setting hips to prepare shoulder stance, reach across left and place sai on top with both sai in right (closed) chamber position stepping in left to attention stance and bow.

## American Open Sai Kata 1 & 2

### Embusen

