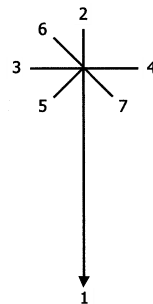


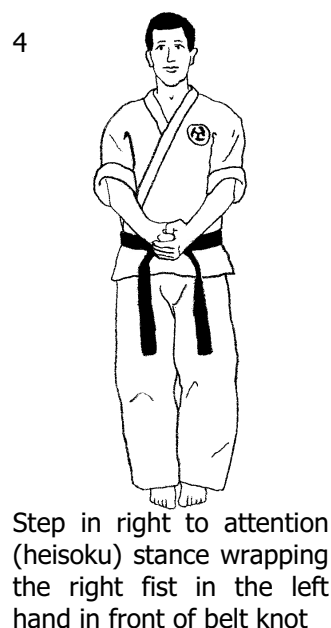
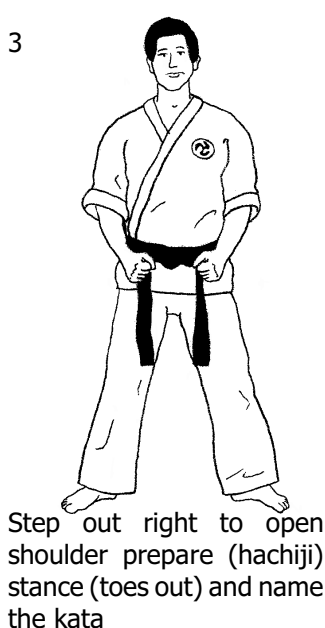
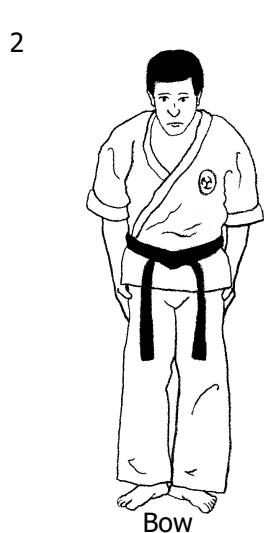
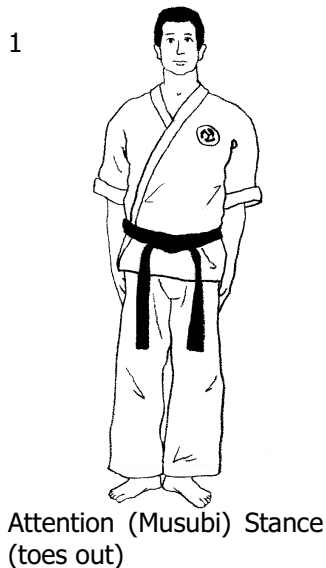
KATA BASSAI DAI

Storming the Enemy's Fortress



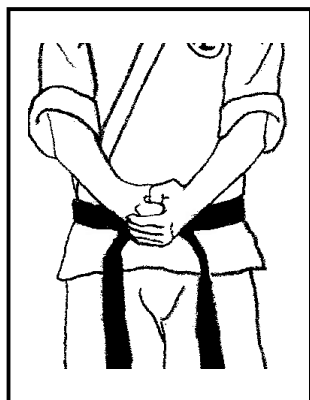
Yoi

attention, bow, yoi, and kamae

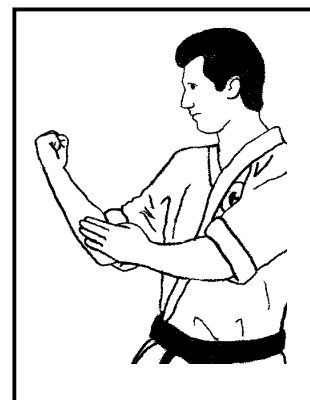


First attacker toward direction 1

jump right reinforced middle block



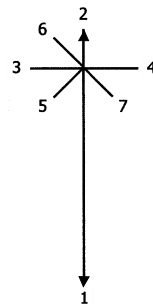
Front view
Closeup of hand position



Side view
Closeup of hand position

KATA BASSAI DAI

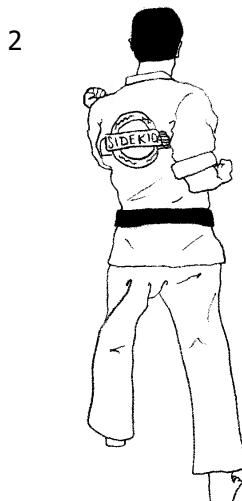
Storming the Enemy's Fortress



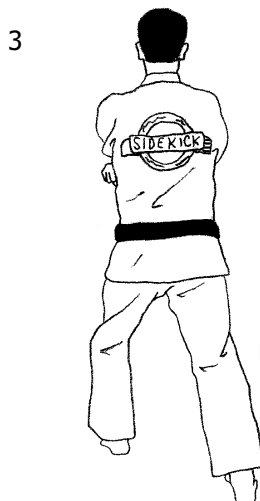
Second attacker toward direction 2 left outward/right outward block



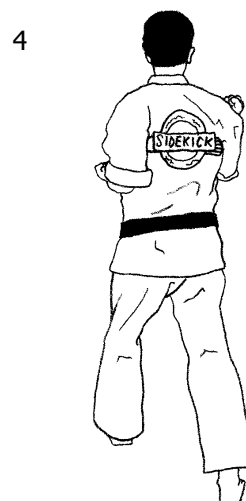
Step left turning left 1/2 turn to left front (zenkutsu) stance chambering left fist under right lead arm



Left middle outward forearm block drawing right fist to chamber twisting to half-facing front stance

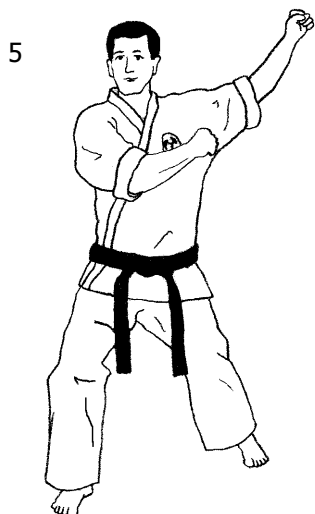


Remain in left front (zenkutsu) stance chambering right fist under left lead arm



Right middle outward forearm block drawing left fist to chamber twisting to half-facing front stance

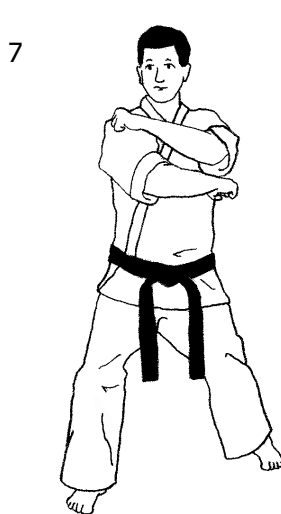
Third attacker toward direction 1 left inward/right outward block



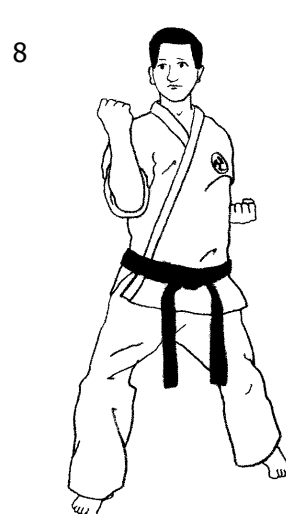
Step right turning right 1/2 turn to right front (zenkutsu) stance cocking left fist behind and above shoulder (shooting star pose)



Left middle level hammer striking block (uchi-komi) drawing right fist to chamber



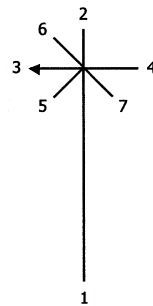
Remain in right front (zenkutsu) stance chambering right fist under left lead arm



Right middle outward forearm block drawing left fist to chamber twisting to half-facing front stance

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Storming the Enemy's Fortress

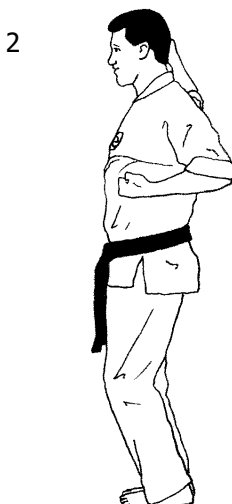


Fourth attacker toward direction 3

right downward scooping/inward block/left outward block



1 Draw in right foot to left dipping body (bending the knees) and right downward scooping (backfist) block to right side (direction 3)



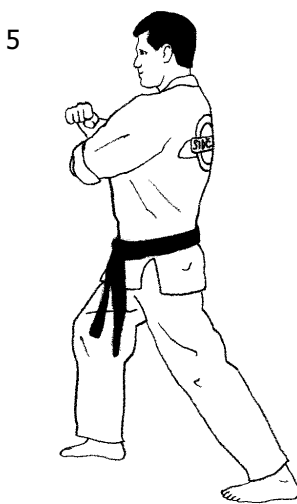
2 Turn right 1/4 turn raising body up chambering right fist out and above shoulder



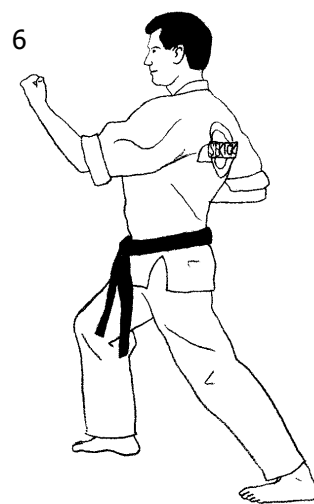
3 Step up right to right front (zenkutsu) stance and lead left open hand



4 Right middle level hammer striking block (uchi-komi) drawing left fist to chamber



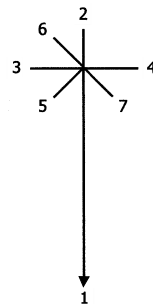
5 Remain in right front (zenkutsu) stance chambering left fist under right lead arm



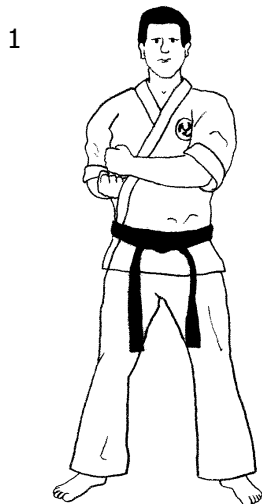
6 Left middle outward forearm block drawing right fist to chamber slightly drawing in right foot twisting to half-facing front stance

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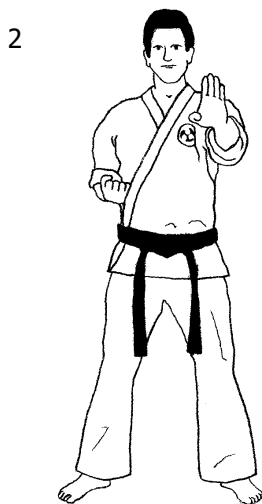
Storming the Enemy's Fortress



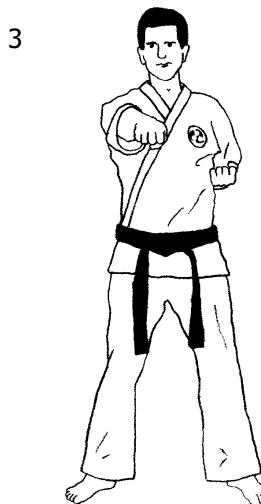
Fifth attacker toward direction 1 punch/twisting outward block (both sides)



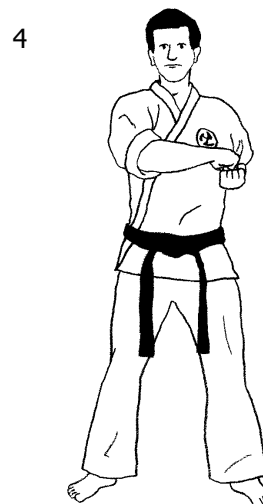
1 Step back left turning left ¼ turn facing back to front to open shoulder (soto-hachiji) stance (toes out) chambering both fists on right side (cup & saucer)



2 Extend an arcing horizontal open hand sweeping block across the body



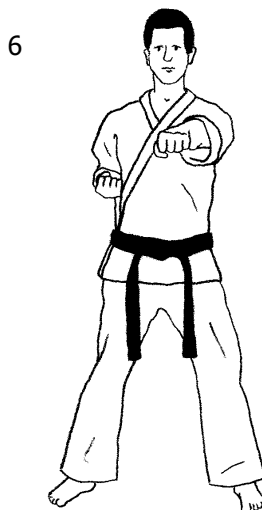
3 Right turnover punch drawing left hand back to chamber (as if pulling an opponent)



4 Chamber right fist to chest (palm down)



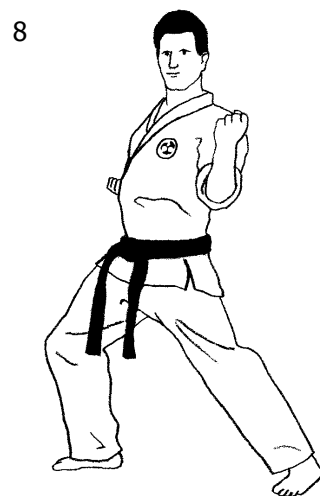
5 Right middle level outside forearm block pivoting 45° to left slanted bow stance (left diagonal front stance)



6 Left turnover punch pivoting back to open shoulder stance drawing right hand back to chamber (as if pulling an opponent)



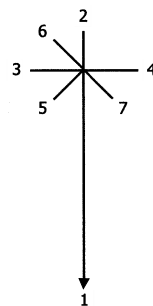
7 Chamber left fist to chest (palm down)



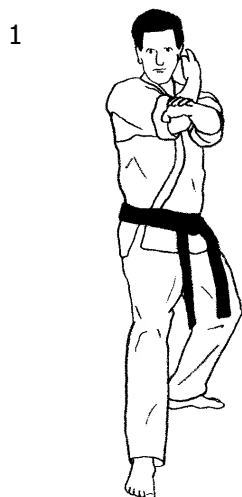
8 Left middle level outside forearm block pivoting 45° to right slanted bow stance (right diagonal front stance)

KATA BASSAI DAI

Storming the Enemy's Fortress



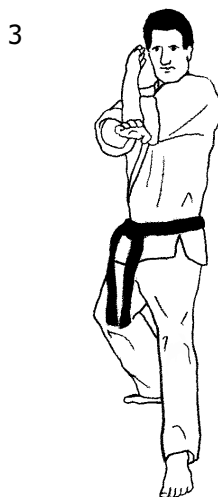
Sixth attacker continuing toward direction 1 right shuto/left shuto/right shuto/left shuto strike



Step right and lead left open-hand to left back (kokutsu) stance chambering right open-hand to opposite ear



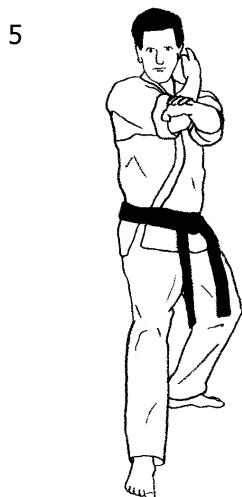
Execute a right middle sword hand block with a left inverted sword hand (palm facing up) to own solar plexus



Step left and lead right open-hand to right back (kokutsu) stance chambering left open-hand to opposite ear



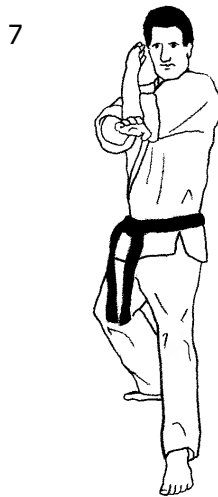
Execute a left middle sword hand block with a right inverted sword hand (palm facing up) to own solar plexus



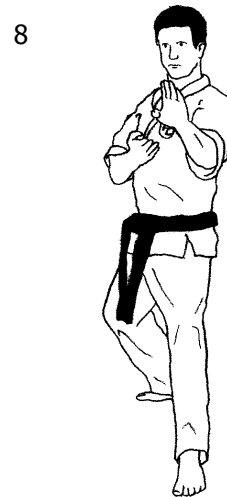
Step right and lead left open-hand to left back (kokutsu) stance chambering right open-hand to opposite ear



Execute a right middle sword hand block with a left inverted sword hand (palm facing up) to own solar plexus



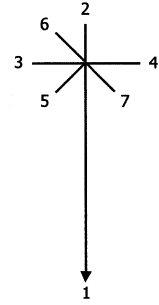
Step back right and lead right open-hand to right back (kokutsu) stance chambering left open-hand to opposite ear



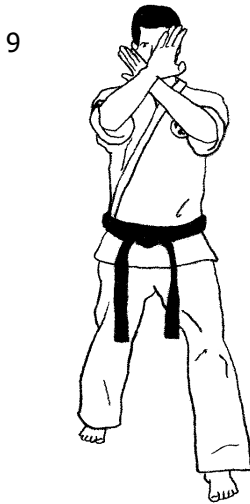
Execute a left middle sword hand block with a right inverted sword hand (palm facing up) to own solar plexus

KATA BASSAI DAI

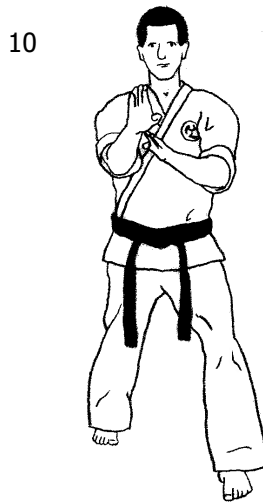
Storming the Enemy's Fortress



Seventh attacker continuing toward direction 1
 double grasping block/right stamp/"kiai!"



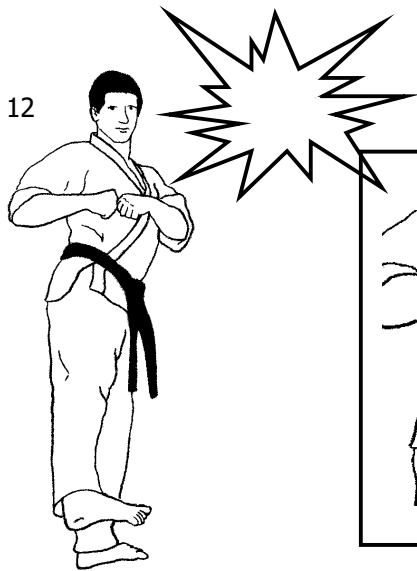
9 Step out right to left front stance and circle right hand under left arm to high shuto (palm facing out)



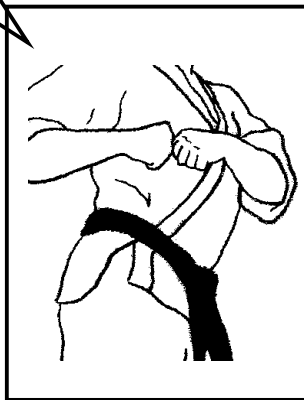
10 Pull right hand down middle level placing fingers of left hand on left side of right wrist



11 Raise the right knee between own arms as high as possible



12 Execute a right low level stamping side sword foot grasping and pulling both hands to a closed-fist position to right side of chest (both fists are palms down) and "**Kiai!**"



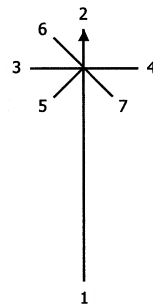
Front view
 Closeup of hand position



13 Pull right knee back up to sidekick knee lift

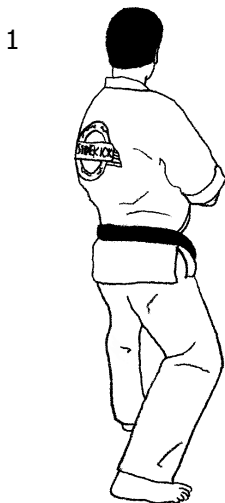
KATA BASSAI DAI

Storming the Enemy's Fortress

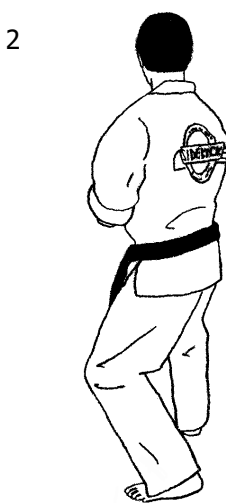


Beginning of eighth attacker toward direction 2

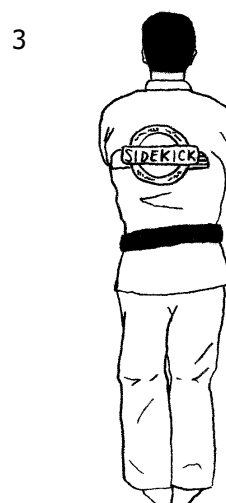
left shuto/right shuto strike/double upward block



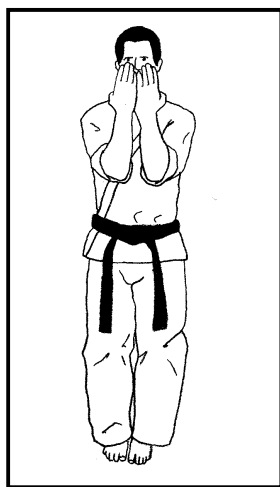
1 Turn left 1/2 turn to right back stance and lead right chambering left hand to opposite ear and left middle sword hand



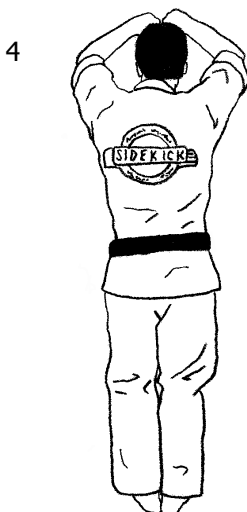
2 Step up right to left back stance and lead left chambering right hand to opposite ear and right middle sword hand



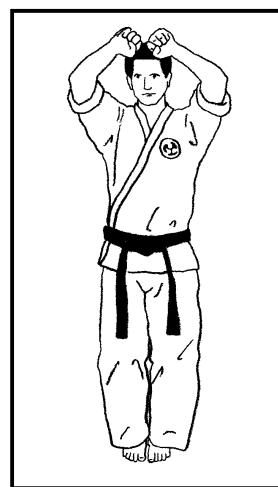
3 Step back right feet together and bring both arms in to centerline eye level (open-hand)



Rear view of figure 3



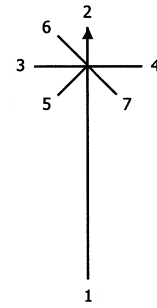
4 Double upward block (closed-fist)



Rear view of figure 4

KATA BASSAI DAI

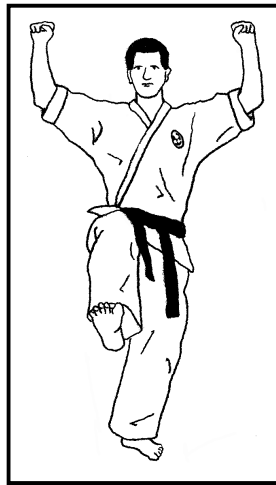
Storming the Enemy's Fortress



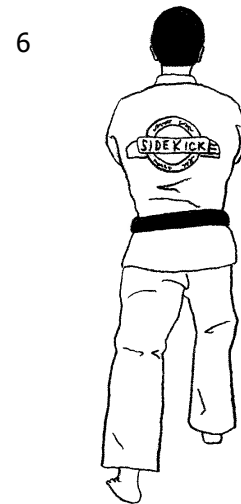
Continuation of eighth attacker toward direction 2
 double clearing/inward hammer strike/right lunge punch



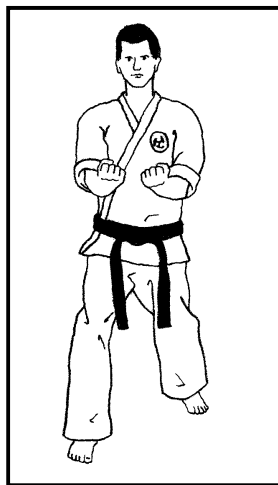
5
 Raise both fists up and out (palms outward) clearing off a high two-hand attack raising the right knee (scooping toe kick)



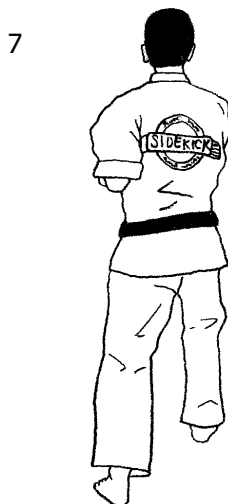
Rear view of figure 5



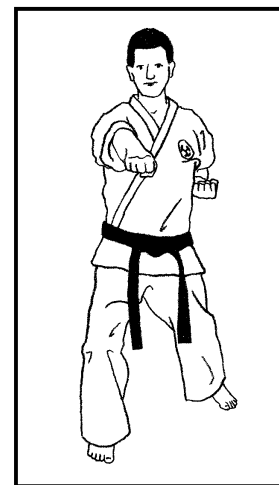
6
 Stamp down right into a right front stance circling both hands to a middle double inward hammerfist strike to opponent's kidneys



Rear view of figure 6



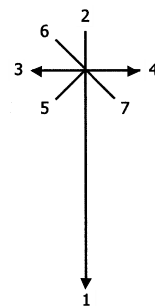
7
 Push-slide forward (yori ashi) without altering stance and right middle lunge punch pulling left hand to chamber (no lead)



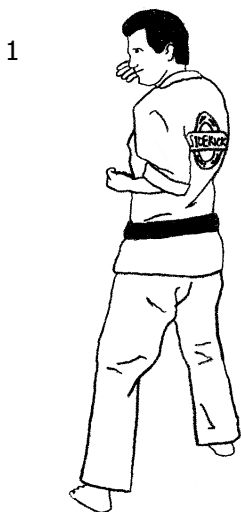
Rear view of figure 7

KATA BASSAI DAI

Storming the Enemy's Fortress



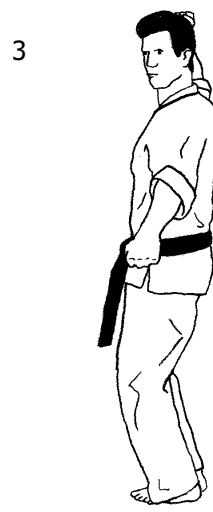
Ninth attacker toward direction 1 (also facing direction 3 & 4)
 right inverted palm/throw/stamp/downward block/double arm wrap



1
 Cock right open-hand behind right ear ready to strike and look behind left



2
 Turn left 1/2 turn to left front stance and left open-hand cross check to right shoulder and right lower level sword hand strike (palm up)



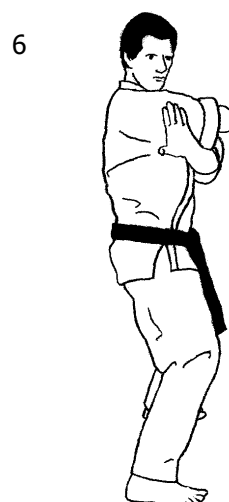
3
 Slowly pull left foot in to right (feet together) facing direction 3 looking toward direction 1 and rear right high out block (fist above head)/front left down block



4
 Turn right 1/2 turn raising right knee and cocking right hand



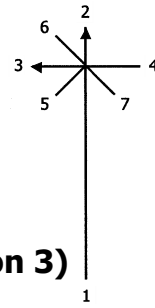
5
 Right stamp/right down block to side horse (kiba) stance drawing left to chamber facing direction 4 looking toward direction 1



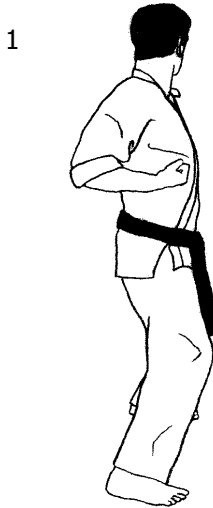
6
 Wrapping the arms, right cross check to left shoulder and left cross check (palm out) under right armpit (folding crane wings)

KATA BASSAI DAI

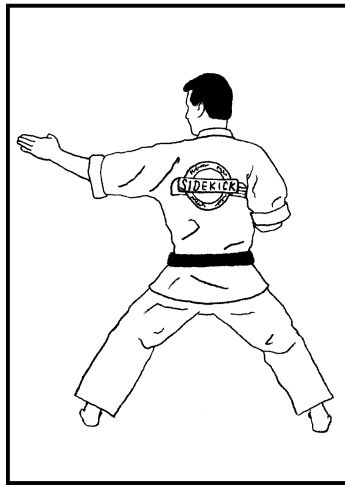
Storming the Enemy's Fortress



Beginning of tenth attacker toward direction 2 (ending facing direction 3)
 left backhand block/right crescent kick/elbow smash



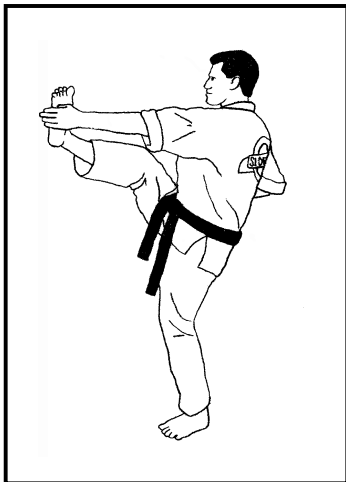
1
 Look left toward direction 2 remaining in horse stance and slowly extend a left backhand block drawing right hand to chamber (drawing the bow)



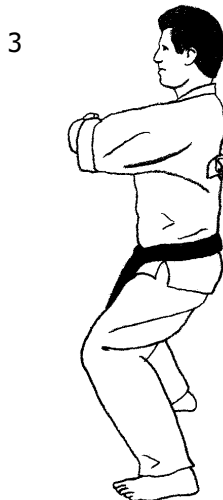
Side view of figure 1



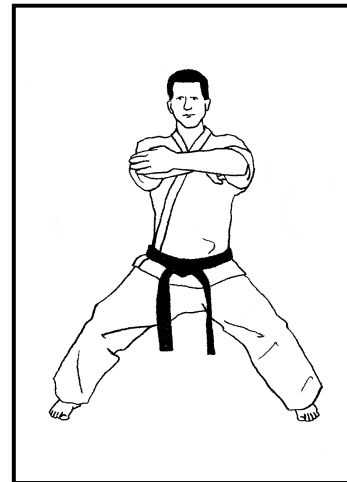
2
 Right inside crescent kick striking own left palm with sole of the foot without moving the hand



Side view of figure 2



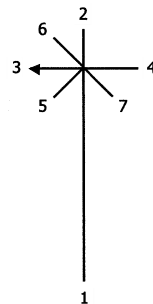
3
 Step down right completing 1/2 turn to opposite side horse (kiba) stance and right middle elbow smash facing direction 3



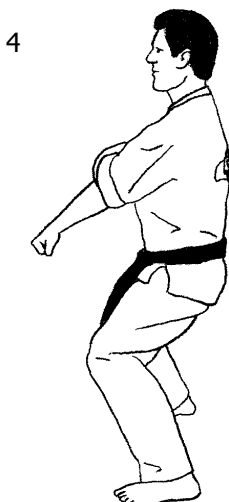
Side view of figure 3

KATA BASSAI DAI

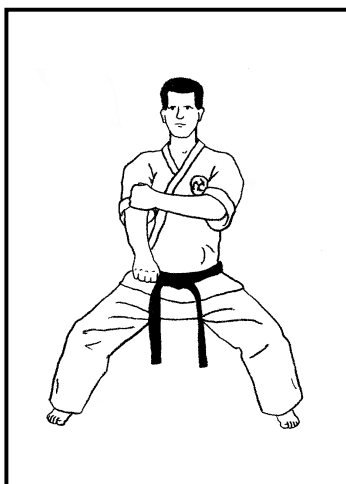
Storming the Enemy's Fortress



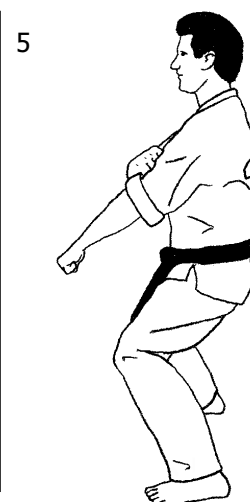
Continuation of tenth attacker facing direction 3
right/left/right reinforced downward block



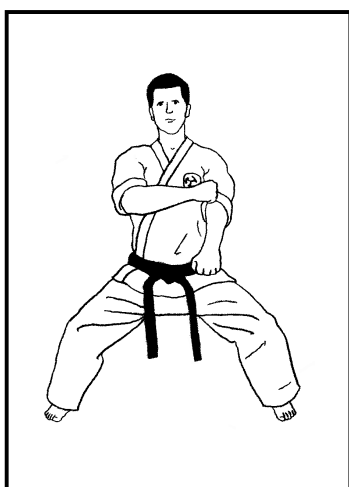
Immediately execute a right downward block clenching the left fist (fingers touching the arm)



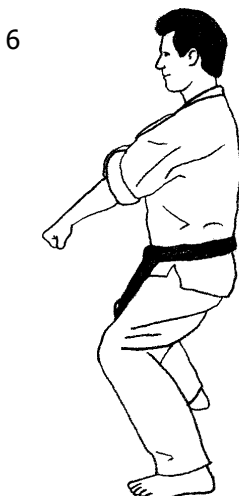
Side view of figure 4



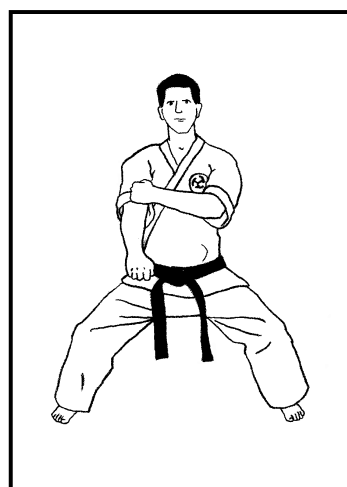
Execute a left downward block (passing on the inside) as you raise the right arm across the chest (fingers touching the arm)



Side view of figure 5



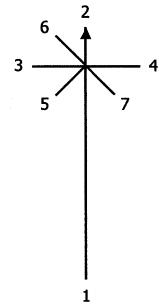
Execute a right downward block (passing on the inside) as you raise the left arm across the chest (fingers touching the arm)



Side view of figure 5

KATA BASSAI DAI

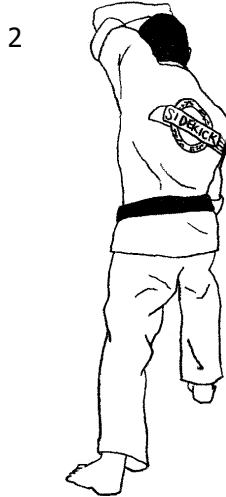
Storming the Enemy's Fortress



Beginning of eleventh attacker continuing toward direction 2
 chamber left/yama-zuki/chamber right/left knee block



Immediately look right stepping right ¼ turn to right front stance chambering both fists on left side (cup & saucer)



Execute a wide U-punch (yama-zuki) to the philtrum and solar plexus (left fist high/right inverted fist low)



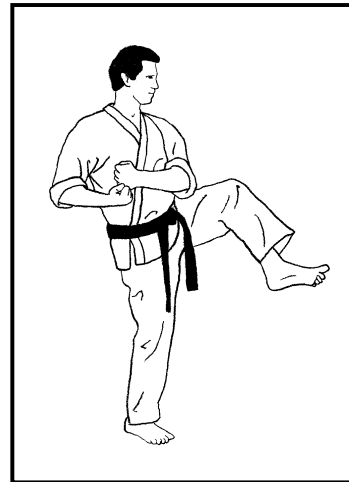
Side view of figure 2



Pull right foot back to left (feet together) chambering both fists on right side (cup & saucer)



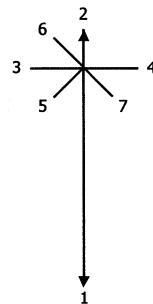
Left inside hooking knee block



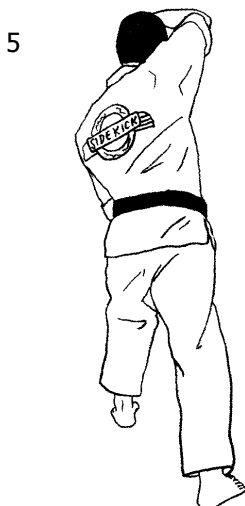
Side view of figure 4

KATA BASSAI DAI

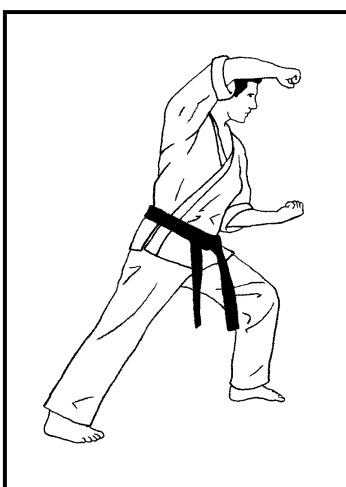
Storming the Enemy's Fortress



Continuation of eleventh attacker toward direction 2 yama-zuki/chamber left/yama-zuki



5 Step down left to front stance and wide U-punch (yama-zuki) to the philtrum and solar plexus (right fist high/left inverted fist low)



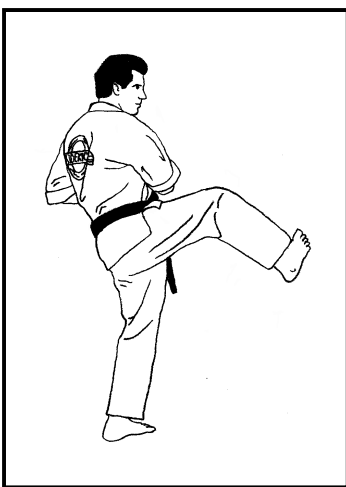
6 Side view of figure 5



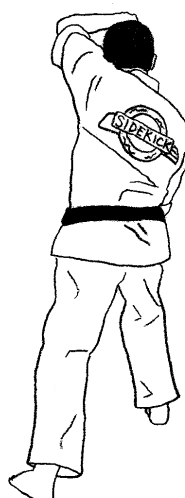
6 Pull left foot back to right (feet together) chambering both fists on left side (cup & saucer)



7 Right inside hooking knee block



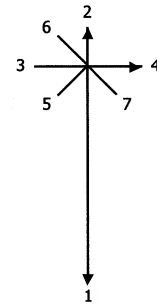
8 Side view of figure 7



8 Step down right to front stance and wide U-punch (yama-zuki) to the philtrum and solar plexus (left fist high/right inverted fist low)

KATA BASSAI DAI

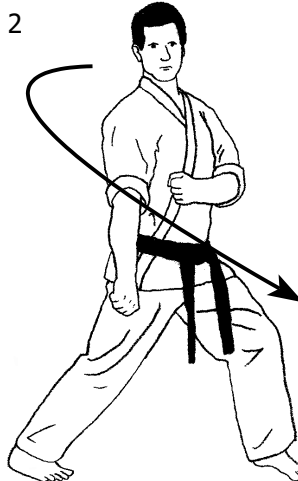
Storming the Enemy's Fortress



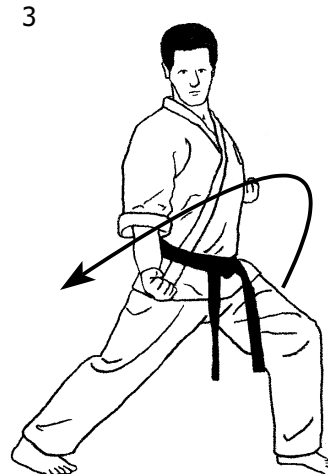
Twelfth attacker toward direction 1
sweeping downward inside scooping block/backfist (both sides)



1 Step left behind right foot toward direction 4 (1/2 turn) to short horse stance facing direction 1 and lower left fist center drawing right fist behind and above shoulder



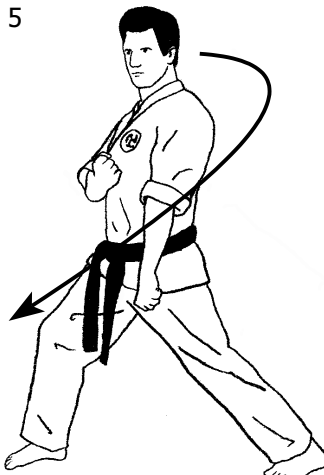
2 Right sweeping downward inside scooping block pivoting left 45° to bow stance turning right fist inward under left arm



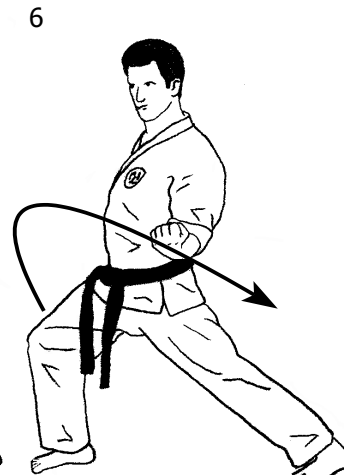
3 Continue to circle right arm clockwise to middle level backfist pulling left fist to chamber sinking left knee to deeper stance



4 Draw left fist behind and above shoulder



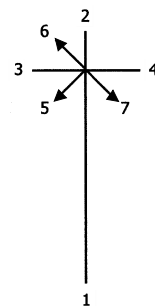
5 Left sweeping downward inside scooping block pivoting right 45° to bow stance turning left fist inward under right arm



6 Continue to circle left arm counter clockwise to middle level backfist pulling right fist to chamber sinking right knee to deeper stance

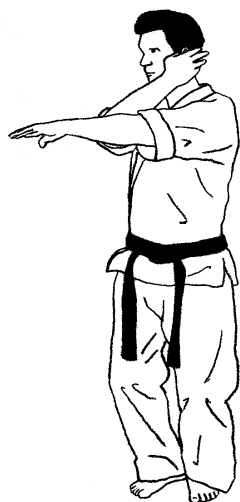
KATA BASSAI DAI

Storming the Enemy's Fortress



Thirteenth attacker toward direction 5 shuffle right shuto strike

1



Shuffle-up left (feet together) facing 45° angle toward direction 5 and lead left chambering right hand to opposite ear

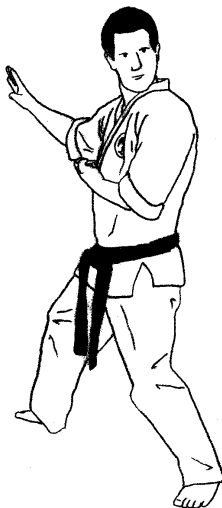
2



Step right on 45° angle to left kokutsu-dachi and right crossing middle shuto strike (left palm facing up) against solar plexus

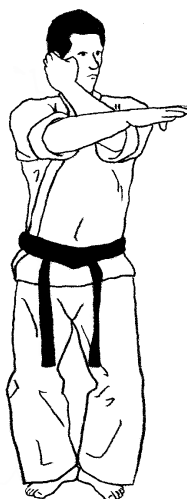
Fourteenth attacker toward direction 7 (preparing toward 6) shuffle left shuto strike

4



Slowly step back right to left kokutsu-dachi 45° toward direction 6 lining up right shuto (keeping left hand in place) looking behind toward direction 7

5



Shuffle-up right (feet together) facing 45° angle toward direction 7 and lead right chambering left hand to opposite ear

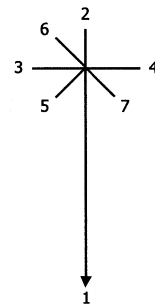
6



Step left on 45° angle to right kokutsu-dachi and left crossing middle shuto strike (right palm facing up) against solar plexus and "Kiai!"

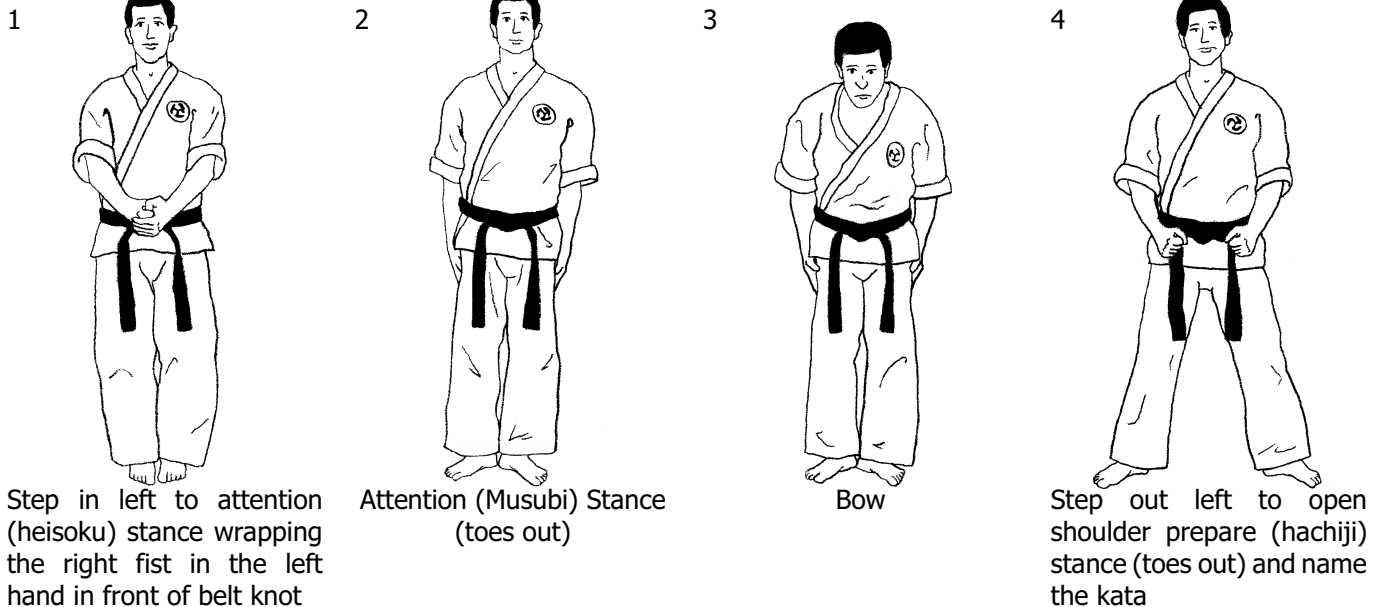
KATA BASSAI DAI

Storming the Enemy's Fortress



Yama

kamae/attention/bow/yoi



End of Kata

Written by Ricky Smith (May 31, 2016)

The first kata I competed with as a black belt, over 40 years ago, was Bassai Dai. This form was taught to me by David A. Adams from his style of American Jee Do Kwan Karate. I included this Shotokan kata in the American Open Karate System in honor of my friend, Thomas C. LaPuppet, a Shotokan stylist from New York, who I met through Dave Adams.

Bassai Dai can be an easy kata to learn, but a difficult kata to master. This kata can make or break a student from the commitment of becoming a black belt for life. The timing of fast and slow movements (yin and yang) are essential to the correct rhythm of the kata. A student must perform this kata vigorously, but with composure and dignity.

The signature movement in this kata, to me, is the wide U-punch (yama-zuki) against a hair grab. Other distinct movements are the jumping reinforced outward block, blocking to grasping and pulling the attacker into a side stamp, double high block to double inward hammerfist strikes, and the three reinforced downward blocks after the elbow smash.

The bunkai in this form is very basic on the surface. Once the karateka opens his mind to the movements in this kata, especially the transition between stances, he will constantly discover new jewels in this old traditional kata.

Even though some say they perform this kata the way it was originally authored, or the way Gichin Funakoshi performed it, my personal research shows minor changes from the past to the way it is performed today. My goal is to record, in this manual, the American Open way of performing Bassai Dai, which is close to my references listed below. I tried to communicate the movements more specifically in my unique personal outlay design, use of terminology, and drawings.

Karate-do Kyohan, The Master Text by Gichin Funakoshi

Best Karate by Masatoshi Nakayama (taught by Gichin Funakoshi)

Shotokan Karate performed by Kancho Hirokazu Kanazawa, 10th Dan (taught by Masatoshi Nakayama and Gichin Funakoshi)