

# Warrior Spirit Karate

*“Let Us Develop The Warrior In You”*

## Shotokan

### Funakoshi Gichin Sensei

Gichin Funakoshi was born in 1868 in Okinawa and began to study karate at the age of 11. He studied under many great Okinawan masters of the time and rapidly became adept at both the Shorin and Shorei styles. In fact many of today's modern Shotokan katas have their roots in the original Okinawa-te or Tode katas.

Tode could also be pronounced as kara and so Tode-te became Kara-te or 'Chinese hand'. Funakoshi adopted the alternate meaning for the chinese character for 'kara' which is empty and so kara-te came to mean 'empty hand'. Karate was first demonstrated in Japan in 1917 by Gichin Funakoshi at the Butoku-den in Kyoto. He was invited back in 1922 by Dr. Jano Kano, the founder of Judo, and remained in Japan to teach Karate at the Kodokan Dojo with the backing of the Judo master.

Karate gained massive popularity with university students and Funakoshi continued to teach at various colleges around Japan.

It is at these colleges and universities that many of the modern masters such as Nakayama, Obata, Noguchi and Watanabe were introduced to the art.

By the mid 1930's Gichin Funakoshi started to have less to do with the running of his clubs and handed control to his son Yoshitaka. Yoshitaka continued to modernise the style until in 1936, the Funakoshi's opened a new central dojo - the Shoto-kan (hall of shoto). Shoto was the pen name Gichin Funakoshi used to sign the poems he had written in his youth.

World War II had a serious effect on the growth of Karate in Japan, as many of the former practitioners went off to serve in Japan's armed forces. The additional blows of the death of Yoshitaka, the destruction of the Shoto-kan and the banning of Martial Arts by the conquering Allied forces, left Shotokan Karate in complete disarray.

Gichin Funakoshi managed to get the ban on Karate lifted and in 1948 the Nihon Karate Kyokai (Japan Karate Association) was formed, with Master Funakoshi named as chief instructor. Due to Funakoshi's advancing age (81), Masatoshi Nakayama took on most the teaching and Hidetaka Nishiyama headed up the instruction committee.

Master Funakoshi died in April of 1957. Engraved on his tombstone are the words "Karate ni sente nashi" or "There is no first attack in Karate".

After his death, Funakoshi's students adopted "Shotokan" as the name of the style of karate they practiced and today Shotokan is one of the most popular martial styles in the world.