

## History of Karate

In 1429, the three kingdoms on Okinawa unified to form the Kingdom of Ryukyu. When King Sho Shin came into power in 1477, he banned the practice of martial arts. To-te and kobudo continued to be taught in secret. The ban was continued in 1609 after Okinawa was invaded by the Satsuma Domain of Japan. The bans contributed to the development of kobudo, which uses common household and farming implements as weaponry. The Okinawans combined Chinese martial arts with the existing local variants to form To-de (China hand), sometimes called Okinawa-te.

By the 18th century, different types of Te had developed in three different villages – Naha, Shuri and Tomari. Practitioners from these three villages went on to develop modern karate. Well into the 20th century, the martial arts of Okinawa were generally referred to as te, which is Japanese for "hand". Te varied from one town to another, so to distinguish among the various types of te, the word was often prefaced with its area of origin; for example, Naha-te, Shuri-te or Tomari-te; collectively defined as Tode-jutsu or To-de.

By the 1930s, a number of formal organizations were founded to oversee Okinawan martial arts, and due to their influence, the word Kara-te came to be widely accepted as a generic term for all sorts of Okinawan unarmed martial arts. With the popularity of the term Karate, the practice of naming a type of martial art after its area of origin declined.

## Origins of Karate

**Kushanku** (1720 - 1762) also known as Kwang Shang Fu, was a Chinese martial artist who lived during the 18th century. He is credited as having an influence on virtually all karate-derived martial arts. Kushanku learned the art of Ch'uan Fa (Chinese Boxing) in China from a Shaolin monk. Around 1756, Kushanku was sent to Okinawa as an ambassador of the Qing Dynasty. He resided in the village of Kanemura, near Naha. During his stay in Okinawa, Kushanku taught Sakugawa Kanga for six years until his death.

**Sakugawa Kanga** (1733 - 1815) was an Okinawan martial arts master and major contributor to the development of Te, the precursor to



modern karate. In 1750 Sakugawa began his training as a student of an Okinawan monk, Takahara Peichin. After six years of training, Takahara suggested that Sakugawa train under Kushanku, a Chinese master in Ch'uan Fa. Sakugawa spent six years training with Kushanku, and began to spread what he learned on Okinawa in 1762. His most famous student, Matsumura Sokon,

went on to develop the Shuri-te which later develop into Shorin-ryu style of karate.

**Matsumura Sokon** (c. 1809 - 1901) was one of the original karate masters of Okinawa. Matsumura Sokon was born in Yamagawa



Village, Shuri, Okinawa. Matsumura began the study of karate under the guidance of Sakugawa Kanga. Matsumura spent five years studying under Sakugawa and garnered a reputation as an expert in the martial arts. Matsumura was recruited into the service of the Sho family, the royal family of the Ryukyu Kingdom in 1816. He began his career by serving the 17th King of Ryukyu, King Sho Ko

becoming the chief martial arts instructor and bodyguard for the Okinawan Royal Family. He subsequently served in this capacity for the last two Okinawan kings, Sho Iku and Sho Tai. Matsumura travelled on behalf of the royal government to China and Japan, studying martial arts which he brought back to Okinawa. Matsumura was given the title "bushi" meaning "warrior" by the Okinawan king in recognition of his abilities and accomplishments in the martial arts. His notable students are Asato Anko, Itosu Anko. Described by Funakoshi Gichin as a sensei with a terrifying presence, Matsumura was never defeated in a duel, though he fought many. His martial arts endeavours have been the progenitor of many contemporary karate styles: Shorin-ryu, Shotokan and Shito-ryu, for example. Ultimately, all modern styles of karate that evolved from the Shuri-te lineage can be traced back to the teachings of Bushi Matsumura.

**Asato Anko** (1827 - 1906) was an Okinawan master of karate. He was one of the two main karate masters who studied under Matsumura Sokon and taught Funakoshi Gichin, the founder of Shotokan-ryu karate. Asato's family belonged to the Tonochi class (hereditary town and village chiefs), and held authority in the village of Asato, halfway between Shuri and Naha, and he was not only a master of karate, but also skilled at riding horses, Jigen-ryu kendo (swordsmanship), archery, and an exceptional scholar. It is reported that the unarmed Asato once defeated a man armed with a sword.

**Itosu Anko** (1831 - 1915) is considered by many the father of modern karate, although this title is also often given to Funakoshi Gichin because the latter spread karate throughout Japan. Itosu was raised in a strict home, educated in the Chinese classics and calligraphy. Itosu began his to-de (karate) study under Nagahama Chikudan Pechin and was later taught by Matsumura Sokon. Itosu served as a secretary to the last king of the Ryukyu Islands until Japan abolished the Okinawa monarchy in 1879. In 1901, he was instrumental in getting karate introduced into Okinawa's schools. In



1905, Itosu was a part-time teacher of To-te at Okinawa's First Junior Prefectural High School. It was here that he developed the systematic method of teaching karate techniques that are still in practice today. He created and introduced the Heian forms as learning steps for students, because he felt the older kata were too difficult for schoolchildren to learn. While Itosu did not invent karate himself, he modified the kata he learned from his master, Matsumura, and passed these onto the many karate masters he taught, including Funakoshi Gichin.

In October 1908, Itosu wrote a letter, "Ten Precepts (Tode Jukun) of Karate," to draw the attention of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of War in Japan.

**Ten Precepts of Karate** - Karate did not develop from Buddhism or Confucianism. In the past the Shorin-ryu school and the Shorei-ryu school were brought to Okinawa from China. Both of these schools have strong points, which I will now mention before there are too many changes:

1. Karate is not merely practiced for your own benefit; it can be used to protect one's family or master. It is not intended to be used against a single assailant but instead as a way of avoiding a fight should one be confronted by a villain or ruffian.
2. The purpose of karate is to make the muscles and bones hard as rock and to use the hands and legs as spears. If children were to begin training in Tang Te while in elementary school, then they will be well suited for military service. Remember the words attributed to the Duke of Wellington after he defeated Napoleon: "The Battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton."
3. Karate cannot be quickly learned. Like a slow moving bull, it eventually travels a thousand miles. If one trains diligently every day, then in three or four years one will come to understand karate. Those who train in this fashion will discover karate.
4. In karate, training of the hands and feet are important, so one must be thoroughly trained on the makiwara. In order to do this, drop your shoulders, open your lungs, take hold of your strength, grip the floor with your feet, and sink your energy into your lower abdomen. Practice using each arm one to two hundred times each day.
5. When one practices the stances of Tang Te, be sure to keep your back straight, lower your shoulders, put strength in your legs, stand firmly, and drop your energy into your lower abdomen.
6. Practice each of the techniques of karate repeatedly, the use of which is passed by word of mouth. Learn the explanations well, and decide when and in what manner to apply them when needed. Enter, counter, release is the rule of releasing hand (torite).
7. You must decide if karate is for your health or to aid your duty.
8. When you train, do so as if on the battlefield. Your eyes should glare, shoulders drop, and body harden. You should always train with intensity and spirit, and in this way you will naturally be ready.
9. One must not overtrain; this will cause you to lose the energy in your lower abdomen and will be harmful to your body. Your face and eyes will turn red. Train wisely.
10. In the past, masters of karate have enjoyed long lives. Karate aids in developing the bones and muscles. It helps the digestion as well as the circulation. If karate should be introduced beginning in the elementary schools, then we will produce many men each capable of



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defeating ten assailants. I further believe this can be done by having all students at the Okinawa Teachers' College practice karate. In this way, after graduation, they can teach at the elementary schools at which they have been taught. I believe this will be a great benefit to our nation and our military. It is my hope you will seriously consider my suggestion.

Anko Itosu, October 1908.

This letter was influential in the spread of karate.

**Funakoshi Gichin** (1868 - 1957) was the creator of Shotokan karate, perhaps the most widely known style of karate, and is attributed as being the 'father of modern karate'. Following the teachings of Anko Itosu and Anko Asato, he was one of the Okinawan masters who introduced karate to the Japanese mainland in 1921. Gichin Funakoshi was born in Shuri, Okinawa. On starting school he became close friends with the son of Asato Anko, a karate and kendo master who would soon become his first karate teacher. His relations with the Asato family grew and he began nightly travels to the Asato family residence to receive karate instruction from Asato Anko. Funakoshi was trained in both classical Chinese and Japanese philosophies and teachings and became an assistant teacher in Okinawa. Funakoshi trained under Asato and Itosu in both the popular styles of Okinawan karate of the time: Shorei-ryu and Shorin-ryu. Continuing his effort to garner widespread interest in Okinawan karate, Funakoshi ventured to mainland Japan in 1922. In 1930, Funakoshi established the Dai-Nihon Karate-do Kenkyukai to promote communication and information exchange among people who study karate-do. In 1936, Dai-Nippon Karate-do Kenkyukai changed its name to Dai-Nippon Karate-do Shoto-kai. The association is known today as Shotokai, and is the official keeper of Funakoshi's karate heritage. In 1939, Funakoshi built the first Shotokan dojo (training hall) in Tokyo. Shotokan is named after Funakoshi's pen name, Shoto, which means "pine waves" or "wind in the pines". Kan means training hall, or house, thus Shotokan referred to the "house of Shoto". This name was coined by Funakoshi's students when they posted a sign above the entrance of the hall at which Funakoshi taught reading "Shoto kan". He taught karate at various Japanese universities and became honorary head of



the Japan Karate Association upon its establishment in 1949. Funakoshi laid out 20 rules by which students of karate are urged to abide in an effort to "become better human beings", these are known as The Twenty Guiding Principles of Karate (see page 19).

**Funakoshi Gigo** (1906 - 1945) was the third son of Funakoshi Gichin and is widely credited with developing the modern karate Shotokan style. Funakoshi Gigo was born in Okinawa and began the formal study of karate-do at the age of twelve. In the early years, Funakoshi Gichin often took Gigo with him to his training sessions with Asato and Itosu. Gigo moved from to Tokyo with his father and later became senior assistant instructor within the Shotokan organization teaching in various universities. Through his teaching position and understanding of Japanese martial arts he combined the ancient arts of To-de and Shuri-te with his newly developed modern techniques. All these techniques became part of the already large arsenal brought from the ancient Okinawan styles. Integration of these changes into the Shotokan style immediately separated Shotokan from Okinawan karate.



**Nakayama Masatoshi** (1913 - 1987) was born in the Yamaguchi prefecture of Japan, descended from a long line of renowned martial arts instructors. Nakayama entered Takushoku University in 1932 to study Chinese language, and began learning karate under Funakoshi Gichin and his son Gigo. In May 1949, Nakayama, and other colleagues helped establish the Japan Karate Association (JKA) with Funakoshi Gichin as the formal head of the organization and Nakayama appointed as Chief Instructor. In 1956 he restructured the Shotokan karate training program to follow both traditional karate and methods developed in modern sports sciences. Nakayama established Kata (patterns) and Kumite (sparring) as tournament disciplines. Students of the large JKA dojo (training halls) subsequently achieved an unmatched series of tournament successes in the 1950s and 1960s. Nakayama is widely known for having worked to spread Shotokan karate throughout the world. Together with other senior instructors, he formed the JKA instructor trainee program. Many of this program's graduates were sent throughout the world to form new Shotokan dojo.



He was the first master in Shotokan history to attain the rank of 9th dan whilst alive, and continued teaching Shotokan karate until his death on April 15, 1987, in Tokyo, when he was posthumously awarded the rank of 10th dan.

**Enoeda Keinosuke** (1935 - 2003) was born on the island of Kyushu, Japan and as a youth studied Kendo and Judo. On entering Takushoku University he began studying karate and after graduation studied at the Japan Karate Association (JKA) Honbu Dojo (headquarters training hall) in Tokyo under Nakayama Masatoshi, then the JKA's Chief Instructor. He also trained in kumite under the direction of Kase Taiji. On 20 April 1965, following the JKA's policy of sending instructors abroad to introduce karate to the rest of the world, Enoeda travelled to England with other JKA instructors and began teaching in London and



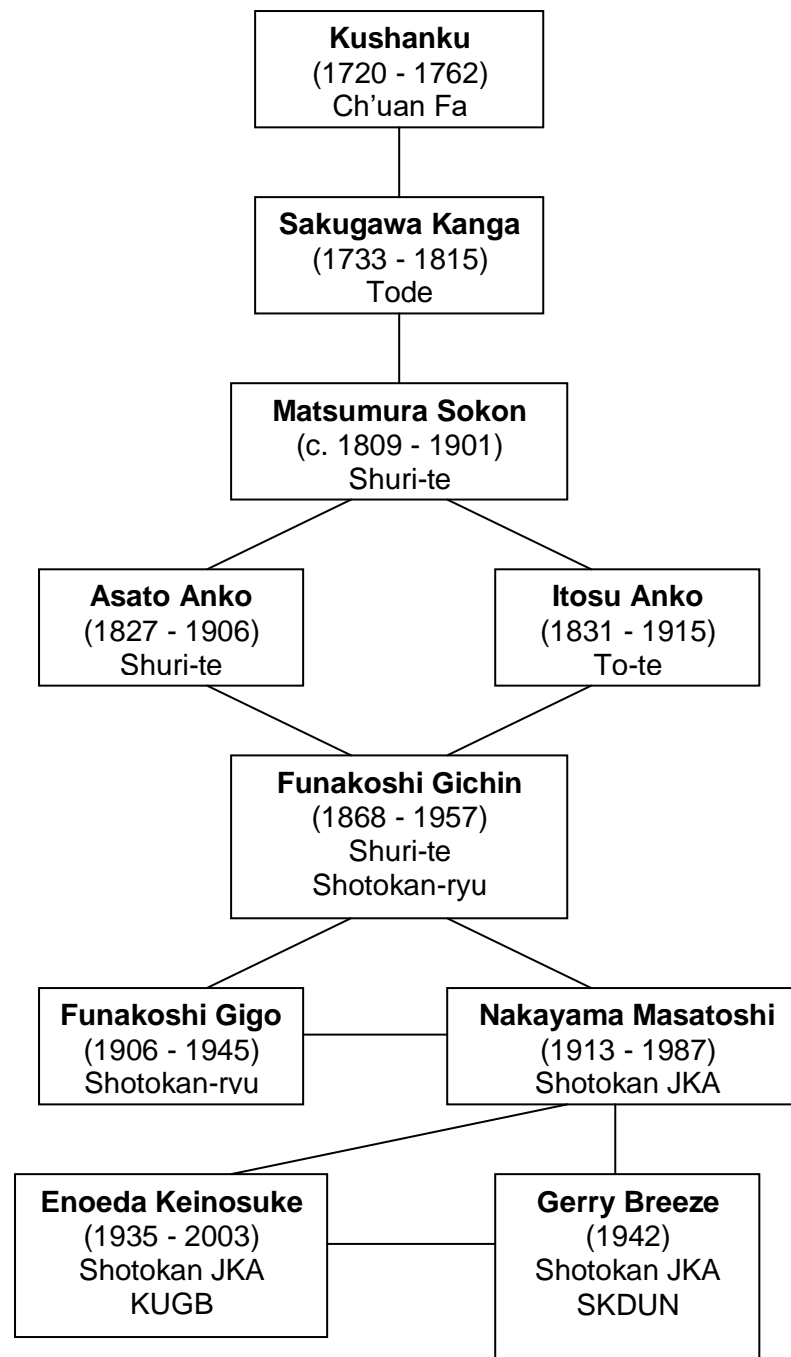
Liverpool and founded the Karate Union of Great Britain (KUGB) at the renowned Marshall Street Dojo near Carnaby Street, London, which has produced some exceptional karateka (practitioners) including our own Sensei, Gerry Breeze. Enoeda was ranked 8th dan in Shotokan karate, and was widely renowned as a formidable karateka, he continued teaching karate, at the Marshall Street Dojo until his death on 29 March 2003. Following his death, Enoeda was posthumously awarded the rank of 9th dan.

**Gerry Breeze** (1942), 9th Dan. Sensei Breeze's training life and experience comes with well over 40 years of top Japanese instruction, training under such people as Nakayama, Kanazawa, Enoeda, Osaka, Tanaka, Yahara, Abe, Asai and Ohta, the list is endless, Sensei Enoeda being his chief instructor for 28 years. Sensei Breeze has been the Chief Instructor of the renowned Bournemouth Kanku Shotokan Karate Club for over 45 years and is the Technical Director of the SKDUN. He has become a renowned International Instructor, teaching the original art of JKA Nakayama Shotokan



Karate and has travelled regularly to Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan, Romania, Germany and the USA.

## KANKU KARATE BUDOKAN - SHOTOKAN LINEAGE



**Master Gichin Funakoshi's Twenty Precepts of Karate**  
(Niju Kun)

1. Karate-do begins with courtesy and ends with rei.
2. There is no first strike in karate.
3. Karate is an aid to justice.
4. First know yourself before attempting to know others.
5. Spirit first, technique second.
6. Always be ready to release your mind.
7. Accidents arise from negligence.
8. Do not think that karate training is only in the dojo.
9. It will take your entire life to learn karate, there is no limit.
10. Put your everyday living into karate and you will find "Myo" (subtle secrets).
11. Karate is like boiling water, if you do not heat it constantly, it will cool.
12. Do not think that you have to win, think rather that you do not have to lose.
13. Victory depends on your ability to distinguish vulnerable points from invulnerable ones.
14. The outcome of the battle depends on how you handle weakness and strength.
15. Think of your opponent's hands and feet as swords.
16. When you leave home, think that you have numerous opponents waiting for you.
17. Beginners must master low stance and posture, natural body positions are for the advanced.
18. Practicing a kata exactly is one thing, engaging in a real fight is another.
19. Do not forget to correctly apply: strength and weakness of power, stretching and contraction of the body, slowness and speed of techniques.
20. Always think and devise ways to live the precepts of karate-do every day.