



# Karate-Do: My Way of Life

*Gichin Funakoshi*

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## **Karate-Do: My Way of Life** Gichin Funakoshi

Linking the time when karate was a strictly Okinawan art of self-defense shrouded in the deepest secrecy and the present day, when it has become a martial art practiced throughout the world, is Gichin Funakoshi, the "Father of Karate-do."

Out of modesty, he was reluctant to write this autobiography and did not do so until he was nearly ninety years of age. Trained in the Confucian classics, he was a schoolteacher early in life, but after decades of study under the foremost masters, he gave up his livelihood to devote the rest of his life to the propagation of the Way of Karate. Under his guidance, techniques and nomenclature were refined and modernized, the spiritual essence was brought to the fore, and karate evolved into a true martial art.

Various forms of empty-hand techniques have been practiced in Okinawa for centuries, but due to the lack of historical records, fancy often masquerades as fact. In telling of his own famous teachers-and not only of their mastery of technique but of the way they acted in critical situations-the author reveals what true karate is. The stories he tells about himself are no less instructive: his determination to continue the art, after having started it to improve his health; his perseverance in the face of difficulties, even of poverty; his strict observance of the way of life of the samurai; and the spirit of self-reliance that he carried into an old age kept healthy by his practice of Karate-do.

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