

Goju-ryu Karate



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Goju-ryu History

The art of Naha-te, founded by Kanryo Higaonna Sensei, forms the basis of Goju Ryu Karate. Kanryo Higaonna Sensei was born in 1853 and was part of the lower gentry. He longed to study the art of Chinese Kempo in China and spent sixteen years in Foochow, studying under Master Ryu Ryuko. Upon his return to Okinawa, Kanryo Higaonna Sensei began teaching his sons the art he had learned. As the word spread of his great skill, he soon also taught members of the royal family. Later he opened his own dojo. Kanryo Higaonna Sensei was especially known for his incredible speed, strength and power and his art became known as Naha-dee (te).

The actual founder of the Goju Ryu karate was Miyagi Chojun Sensei, a personal disciple of Kanryo

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Higaonna Sensei. At the age of 14, Miyagi Chojun Sensei met Kanryo Higaonna Sensei and together they devoted their lives to the improvement and advancement of the art of Naha-te. They spent thirteen years together until Kanryo Higaonna Sensei passed away in 1916. The same year Miyagi Chojun Sensei left for China to discover the roots of Naha-te in the city of Foochow. Unfortunately, all had fled during the revolutionary war and he returned to Okinawa.

In addition to his personal training and development of Naha-te, Miyagi Chojun Sensei spent a great deal of his time promoting the art. In 1921, he performed a demonstration of Naha-te in Okinawa for the visiting Prince Hirohito, Emperor of Japan, and in 1925 for Prince Chichibu. Miyagi chojun Sensei had already envisioned the development of Naha-te not only in Japan but also around the world. It became increasingly important to organize and unify Okinawan karate as a cultural treasure to be passed on to future generations. In 1926, Miyagi Chojun Sensei established the Karate Research Club in Wakas-Cho.. In 1930, Miyagi Chojun Sensei performed at the Butoku-kai Tournament and at the Sainei Budo Tournament in 1932.

As its exposure increased, many became interested in Miyagi Chojun Sensei's art. One of Miyagi Chojun Sensei's senior disciples, Shinzato Sensei, gave a performance of kata at a Japanese martial arts tournament. Afterwards, a master asked the name of his school. Shinzato Sensei had no answer for him, returned to Okinawa and told Miyagi Chojun Sensei about his encounter. Miyagi Chojun Sensei decided it was necessary to name his art. It became known as Goju Ryu Karate, meaning hard and soft taken from the precepts of traditional Chinese Kempo. He was the first among different schools of karate to name his art and in 1933 his art of Goju Ryu was formally registered at the Butoku-kai, Japanese Martial Arts Association.

Miyagi Chojun Sensei chose the name Goju Ryu from the Eight Precepts of traditional Chinese Kempo found in the document Bubishi and are as follows:

- 1.The mind is one with heaven and earth.
- 2.The circulatory rhythm of the body is similar to the cycle of the sun and the moon.
- 3.The way of inhaling and exhaling is hardness and softness.
- 4.Act in accordance with time and change.
- 5.Techniques will occur in the absence of conscious thought.
- 6.The feet must advance and retreat, separate and meet.
- 7.The eyes do not miss even the slightest change.
- 8.The ears listen well in all directions.

These eight precepts are the essence of the martial arts and are the elements one strives to achieve in training Goju Ryu Karate-do. Such training shall serve to lead humankind to rediscover our natural instincts and capabilities.



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