

Karate-Do: My Way of Life Study Guide

Karate-Do: My Way of Life by Gichin Funakoshi

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Plot Summary

This non-fiction book, with a Copyright date of 1975, takes place over the life of the author from 1868 to 1957 and is an autobiographical sketch of his life. Gichin Funakoshi is a karate master and scholar of the Chinese classics. He is born in Shuri, Okinawa and dies in Tokyo, Japan at the age of ninety years. Gichin devotes his whole life to the practice, development and promotion of Karate-do. He lives a life of moderation and physical discipline to maintain and develop his career, personality and skills. He is not a rich man and lives simply without extravagance. However, he is wealthy in wisdom and personal spirituality. He has a strong and well-developed physical presence even as a ninety-year old man. He is married but lives apart from his wife for much of their life from a mutual understanding and devotion to their individual pursuits. She is a devout Buddhist who follows the tradition to venerate her ancestors in Okinawa when Gichin moves to Tokyo. They have children and he is at her side through her illness and death.

The author teaches for more than thirty years and is in the shizoku class. Gichin learns karate as a young man while it is illegal and must be taught in secret. He learns from Master Azato and Master Itosu, as well as other masters. This book is one of many he writes to research, explore, explain and promote Karate-do. Gichin opens the first school of karate in Japan in 1936. He writes KARATE-DO: MY WAY OF LIFE as the simple story of a life devoted to karate. His writing is straightforward without hyperbole. Funakoshi is a dedicated, simple, honest man who presents the principles of his life in story form. The lessons Gichin learns are illustrated as parables with little philosophical overtone.

"Karate-do: My Way of Life" is a 127 page non-fiction sketch of the life and times of Gichin Funakoshi as a karate master. The author learns, develops and promotes karate from its days of Meiji illegality in 1870 to world-wide popularity today. The book is well-written and easy to understand. Message of the parables presented are paradoxical and require thought and meditation over time to appreciate. The path through the book and his life are clearly marked by chapter and subchapter section names like "Entering the Way" and "One Life." Subtle humor and colorful description is illustrated by phrases like "Losing a Topknot" and "Recognizing Nonsense." A disciple, Genshin Hironishi, President of Japan Karate-do Shoto-kai writes the Foreword that introduces the author. Gichin Funakoshi writes the Preface and is pictured after page 64, one year before his death in 1956. Funakoshi's writing is wise in simplicity as shown in his comment about a waiting snake, "That habu understands very well the spirit of karate."



Entering the Way

Entering the Way Summary and Analysis

This non-fiction book, with a Copyright date of 1975, takes place over the life of the author from 1868 to 1957 and is an autobiographical sketch of his life. Gichin Funakoshi is a karate master and scholar of the Chinese classics. He is born in Shuri, Okinawa and dies in Tokyo, Japan at the age of ninety years. Gichin devotes his whole life to the practice, development and promotion of Karate-do.

The author, Gichin Funakoshi admits to actual birth in 1868 but his official birth date is recorded as 1870. The Meiji Restoration begins in the same year in Edo, which is now called Tokyo, Japan. Gichin is born in Okinawa's capital of Shuri, which is located in the district of Yamakawa-cho. He falsifies his birth date to comply with a regulation. Applicants to the medical school entrance exam must be born in 1870 or later. Ironically, he passes the medical school exam but does not enter the school. Another related Meiji rule requires cutting the traditional topknot hairstyle to begin a medical career. The Funakoshi family opposes this topknot ban and Gichin goes along with family pressure. Gichin believes the topknot ban and several other events influence his life. He is a sickly child raised by grandparents who "coddled and pampered" him. He is in the "shizoku" class which demands learning Four Chinese Classics and Five Chinese Classics of Confucian tradition. While in school he meets the son of Yasutsune Azato. He is one of Okinawa's greatest karate experts. Gichin begins to practice karate with him. Gichin becomes a teacher at twenty-one and must cut his topknot, which angers his father and mother. Gichin practices karate with Azato secretly at night because it is illegal. He also practices with Azato's fellow master Itosu.

Gichin notes some misconceptions that obscure the practice of karate. For example, the "kata" called "nukite" describes penetrating a man's rib cage with five fingers of a hand to tear out his rib bones. Progressive training for nukite uses full casks of beans, sand, pebbles and finally lead pellets. These and other overstated and exaggerated kata result from skillful conversation that Gichin calls "miraculous feats" and a myth. Similar tales abound about a karate adept's strong grip and other extraordinary feats of strength. The author claims these stories are revealed by practitioners who have little understanding of karate. Gichin Funakoshi confirms that karate is one of the most refined martial arts.

Primary school instructors are classified in four teaching groups as elementary classes, higher grades, special courses and assistants. Gichin begins as an assistant but quickly progresses to higher grade instructor. Subsequent promotion is slow and requires more education and travel away from his karate instructors. Gichin wants to remain in Naha. The Obsolete Party opposes the topknot rule twenty-five years after the Meiji introduce it. Okinawa's Ministry of Education insists that instructors with karate experience cut the topknots of obstinate pupils who also know karate. Gichin continues his karate training with other teachers including Masters Kiyuna, Toono, Niigaki and Matsumura as well as



Masters Azato and Itosu. Azato meets the famous Okinawan swordsman named Kanna, who inspires him to compare arms and legs used in karate to swords. Gichin admires Azato and Itosu for their lack of jealousy about other masters and exceptional training.



No Weapons

No Weapons Summary and Analysis

Gichin tells about Matsumura's defeat of another master without striking a blow to reveal the true meaning of karate. An engraver of about forty years old operates a shop in Naha. A younger man in his late twenties or thirties enters the shop. Both men are of good size and fighting spirit. The younger man has the piercing eyes of an eagle but seems pale and dejected from his recent loss of a client. The younger man has a pipe he wants engraved. The engraver politely asks the higher social-class visitor if he is Matsumura and would teach him karate. Matsumura no longer teaches, so the engraver, who is a well-known karate expert, asks for a match. They meet at five o'clock paced twelve yards apart. The engraver launches an attack that Matsumura repels by looking into his eye. He does not move from his natural position. Matsumura repels second and third attacks by the engraver with his eye and thundering voice but no movement. Matsumura learns the only obstacle to life is vanity and is later reappointed to his former position.

Karate's origin is unknown. Gichin remembers it is banned by the Meiji government and cannot be learned at a "dojo" while a child. He is the only student of Master Azato's and one of just a few with Master Itosu. With few professional instructors, little is in writing for Gichin to research. He learns about Napoleon's comment on a small kingdom with no weapons called Ryukyu Islands that are now called Okinawa. The people of Okinawa trade with southern China where boxing evolves into karate. Gichin names it Chinese boxing. Karate methods can kill a man, so it is practiced in secret during an early Meiji period. Okinawan folk dances influence movements of courtesy in karate bouts.

Derivation of the term "karate" has two elements in which the "-te" means hand, but the character for "kara-" means either empty or Chinese. Gichin's experience in Okinawa introduces a third option "bushi no te" or warrior's hands. He resolves the dilemma by using the character for "empty" hands since karate forbids weapons. More significantly, the goal of karate and all the martial arts is emptiness. This is the void at the heart of all creation in the Buddhist tradition. Gichin suggests new names for kata be developed and used as needed. Differing schools may impair future development of karate. Okinawa's two schools named Nawate and Shurite are related to Chinese Wutang named for Chinese mountains where it is first practiced. According to Gichin, despite karate's origins, it is most critical that karate does not admit new and varying forms of practice.

Funakoshi's school is visited by Shintaro Ogawa, commissioner of schools, to see a karate demonstration. He writes a report approved by the Ministry of Education that contributes to popularizing the art. Ogawa's report puts karate on school curricula. In addition, youth organizations and primary schools offer karate training in their physical education courses. Admiral Yashiro and Admiral Dewa both view karate demonstrations,



and within ten years, karate men from Okinawa introduce and teach the art in Tokyo. The crown prince views a demonstration in 1921 in Shuri Castle conducted by the author. Gichin receives a promotion to principal of an outlying school but resigns to stay in the area. His mother is old and bedridden. Gichin as an only son has a duty to care for her. He starts Okinawa Association for Spirit of the Martial Arts to advance Karate-do.



Training for Life

Training for Life Summary and Analysis

Gichin tells a story of his own training practice by quoting the written account of another author. He admits the tale about his youthful activity may make him seem a little mad. The island of Okinawa experiences ferocious typhoons that regularly devastate it. In order to withstand tropical storms with winds up to a hundred miles per hour, houses are built low, sturdy and surrounded by high walls of stone. During one particularly violent storm the Shuri inhabitants all huddle together except for one young man. He is a small man of twenty or younger wearing a loincloth and covered with mud. The young shizoku man has huge shoulders, bulging biceps and a topknot like a sumo wrestler. He holds a straw mat against the wind in the horse-riding karate stance. He stands on the roof of his house to perfect a technique and strengthen body and mind against the howling typhoon.

Okinawa has a poisonous snake named habu that grows to six or seven feet. A serum is injected as soon as possible after being bitten to avoid amputation of the limb or death. Gichin and his oldest son walk at night to Master Azato's for karate practice. The son carries a lantern to light their way. Gichin sees something in the road that he recognizes as a habu coiled to strike. Gichin takes the lantern from his frightened son to swing it back and forth while staring at the habu. The snake slithers into a field. Gichin follows in the field to find the snake waiting to attack while he swings the lantern. This time the habu disappears into the field. Gichin tells his young son the snake understands the spirit of karate because it does not run away but waits to attack again in the field.

The author comments on two incidents that illustrate an apparent irony in Karate-do that lets a man win by losing. In the first case Gichin and some fellow students accompany Master Itosu to on a moon-viewing party one evening. The party lasts later than expected and on their way home to Shuri, they find themselves about to be attacked by a group of men. Itosu instructs his students to stand with their backs to the moon. Both groups have the same number of men but Itosu's group is skilled in karate. Gichin is disappointed when Itosu tells him to talk to them. Itosu is unknown to them but a second group of drinkers knows Itosu and warns the first group of danger in unleashing his karate skill. The first group leaves. Itosu tells his students to take another way home and say nothing about the incident. Gichin hears the group is just out partying and is not the gang he originally thinks. He is impressed that Itosu shows the meaning of karate by avoiding conflict with untrained men. Gichin experiences a second situation when real thieves try to take his money or his tobacco. He has neither so they settle for the cakes he plans to offer at his father-in-law's altar. Gichin tells his Masters that he offers a prayer for the cakes. Azato praises him for beginning to understand the true spirit of karate.

Gichin returns home one evening after his thirtieth birthday. He passes a hand wrestling bout in progress that he stops to watch. Hand wrestling is a sport he enjoys and one in



which he is skilled and confident. He tries to leave but other fans invite and insist on his participation. He wins five bouts in a row. He tries to leave again but is pressed to fight and wins six. On the way home he is attacked by seven or eight men to defend himself against. Gichin is remorseful that he violates the spirit of Karate-do by being overconfident in his strength.

One evening as Gichin is walking past the top of Bengadake forest a man rushes past him into a field of sugarcane. Gichin hears no more sound from the field but finds no trace of the man until Gichin gets to a cesspool. Gichin sees a head floating in the stinking muck. Gichin helps him out and the man races down the hill. Gichin is seized by three police chasing the man for whom they mistake Gichin. Gichin convinces the police the man from the cesspool is the one they want and can identify from his stench. They find him at the bottom of the hill held by another group of police. Gichin offers the police his home to clean him up in on their way to the police station. Gichin sees the bruise on the prisoner's thigh from an unintended kick and feels pity for him until the police tell him about his crimes.

A conflict develops between the coastal village of Motobe and the hamlet of Shaka in Kokuryo County. The underlying reason for the conflict comes from Okinawan gentry who settle the Shaka area but oppose the Tokyo regime. The police cannot resolve the continuing political dispute between Shaka and its neighboring hamlet so they refer the matter to Naha. Gichin is on the faculty of a school near Senno Bay in Chuto County. Since he wants a transfer to Naha, he hopes mediating this conflict might help. Gichin takes a leave of absence to settle the dispute. Residents of the hamlets face each other with strong suspicion and hostility that could become a battle. Gichin agrees to take the job of listening carefully to the arguments with patience. He proposes a compromise that is acceptable to both sides. The residents of both hamlets agree at the Shaka School and the arbitrators return to Naha. A month later Gichin is notified of his promotion. He attributes his training in karate for his success at mediation.

Gichin usually walks two and one-half miles from Naha to Shuri twice each day. He has late meetings one rainy evening so he hires a jinriksha to get home. Jinriksha drivers usually talk a lot and work during the day. Some work at night if they are beset with financial burdens. Gichin's driver is quiet and gives short polite answers to his questions. Gichin recognizes him but it would be impolite to ask his name. His face is shielded by a wide brim hat. When the rain stops and the moon appears Gichin suggests they walk awhile. The driver walks behind Gichin. He finally asks if the driver is Sueyoshi. Initially he denies it but then admits he is Sueyoshi and drops to his knees. Gichin knows Sueyoshi is from an upper-class family descended from warriors. He is Gichin's senior in karate, a stick fighting expert and has his own "bojitsu" school. They finish the trip walking together. Sueyoshi asks Gichin not to reveal that he farms during the day and drives at night to earn enough for his sick wife's medicine. Gichin admires Sueyoshi for representing the perfect embodiment of samurai spirit.

Tug of war is a popular sport played during festivals. Two lengths of rope are joined as one with a loop at one end. Smaller ropes dangle like centipede feet from it and are connected at a ceremony by the referee. The sport starts by the referee stamping on



the feet of the closest man on each team. The sport is an imitation of war and battles develop with fistfights. Gichin finds that players who are intent on winning usually fail but that just enjoying the sport works best for karate as well as a tug of war.

The port of Naha is shallow so large ships must anchor away from the pier. Boarding passengers are ferried out where they board the large ship on its gangway. Gichin ferries out one day. He steps from the smaller boat to the gangway when a wave hits the boat. He finds himself with one foot on the gangway and one on the ferryboat and a briefcase in each hand. He is not a swimmer and is afraid to fall in. Gichin throws the heavier briefcase to the gangway. The momentum pulls him to the gangway where he avoids falling in the water. Azato is seeing him off and observes this happen. Gichin believes Karate trains a man to perform extraordinary feats. Daily practice in any martial arts helps in emergencies.



Recognition

Recognition Summary and Analysis

In 1921 the Ministry of Education holds a demonstration of ancient Japanese martial arts. Gichin is asked to introduce karate to the Japanese capital of Tokyo. He wants to present something dramatic. Gichin decides to show three long scrolls containing photographs of karate stances, kata and movements. He postpones a return home to Okinawa when Kano also requests a demonstration. Gichin is surprised when more than a hundred people watch the demonstration with Shinkin Gima who is a first-rate karateka. Judo master Jigoro Kano asks Gichin to teach him some basic kata. A painter, Hoan Kosugi seeks instruction for his organization, the Tabata Poplar Club. Gichin decides Tokyo is a good place for him to offer Karate-do to the people of Japan. He writes to Masters Azato and Itosu about his idea. They encourage and warn him of the difficulties. Gichin finds temporary quarters at Meisei Juku, an Okinawan dormitory. He can stay there and teach karate for trade and some pay. Gichin is amused by a reporter's surprise that he is both a gardener and karate teacher. He is pleased with a box of sweets for "the elderly man who sweeps the ground" who is also "noted karate expert, Gichin Funakoshi." Gichin laughs when children who play in the garden call him "snake gourd" for his smooth and ruddy-skinned complexion. He is thankful for a windfall from the pawnshop owner for his old derby hat and kimono.

Funakoshi's financial situation improves with the number and quality of his students. A Tokyo university forms a karate group of faculty and students that Gichin visits regularly to give instruction. A well-dressed gentleman and youth from an aristocratic family stop by to decide on karate lessons. The aristocratic youth stays nearby to spend as much time as possible practicing karate. Gichin begins to receive students from many more schools throughout Tokyo including the military and naval academies. He gets very busy and the generous pawnshop owner stops to see if he is well. Gichin's wife stays in Okinawa even when he asks her to join him. His wife is a devout Buddhist who follows a tradition that requires veneration of ancestors. She feels her religious duty is to stay in Okinawa and encourages Gichin to concentrate his efforts on his work despite their separation.

The painter, Hoan Kosugi, encourages Gichin to write a reference book on Karate-do. Funakoshi writes Azato and Itosu and others for any information and ideas they have since there is no written material in Tokyo or Okinawa. Gichin's book is published in 1922 and includes comments by many eminent people in the foreword section. Hoan Kosugi designs it beautifully, but Funakoshi now considers the writing in his five chapter book to be amateurish. Gichin quotes the introduction to it in which he states "This first attempt is, of course, flawed by many defects." A second edition is issued four years later and a second book describing various kata is published in 1935. Gichin is dismayed by popular press notions of "superhuman feats of strength" and "miraculous" ability. An early supporter of Funakoshi is Admiral Rokuro Yashiro, the Russian war hero. Gichin instructs him weekly in karate. A naval man Isamu Takeshita and several



sumo wrestlers are friends and students of Gichin. Grand Champion Onishiki trains with him. Gichin discovers the goal of both karate and sumo wrestling is the training of body and mind.

The Great Kanto Earthquake strikes Tokyo on September 1, 1923. Fires rage through the city's wooden buildings and reduce the capital to ruin. Many students of Gichin vanish in the holocaust. He joins many other volunteers to feed survivors, clean up the ruins and bury the dead. He suspends karate teaching while he finds employment making stencils at Daiichi Sogo Bank that he walks to daily. He wears wooden sandals called "geta" that help to strengthen his leg muscles. As Tokyo begins to rebuild, Gichin finds temporary training quarters with his friend, fencing instructor Hiromichi Nakayama. By 1935 funds are raised to build the first karate dojo in Japan in 1936. It is named Shoto-kan, which is the pen name Funakoshi uses as a youth. The opening is bittersweet since masters Azato and Itosu are no longer alive to share this achievement with him. At his young-appearing age of seventy, Gichin begins his new project to organize a dojo. He makes a set of rules for the increasing number of students. He appoints advanced students to teach for him at universities. He is asked to lecture throughout the country, which he does while senior students run the dojo. Shoto means "pine waves" in Japanese. He selects that name for the rustle of pines as wind breezes through the trees in a favorite spot of his youth.



One Life

One Life Summary and Analysis

Despite fears of war in Manchuria and Mongolia, Japan remains peaceful. The emperor still attends regular functions like a karate demonstration. Gichin recalls the first time he performs for the crown prince. Gichin is well past fifty years old now as he demonstrates karate for His Majesty, who is now the Emperor. Karate is known in the Rukyuan Islands then but hardly known beyond. Now it ranks equally with other traditional martial arts. Funakoshi is moved by His Majesty's memory of the Shuri Castle demonstration and his recognition as the same performer. Gichin's students increase in number while Japan prepares for hostilities with China. Many of his students report being drafted. Those unable to carry a rifle or sword are told to "karate charge" the enemy. He is saddened by news of former students that die in the war. In 1945, his dojo is destroyed in an air raid while he lives with his oldest son in Koishikawa. When the emperor surrenders, Gichin leaves to live with his wife in Kyushu. Neither have any relatives there. Life as refugees from Okinawa is difficult. Her health deteriorates with chronic asthma till she can hardly breathe and she finally dies. Gichin reflects on her dedication and self-sacrifice for him, his karate and their children. The village people arrange her cremation. Gichin takes her ashes by train to Tokyo. Many students greet him and offer condolences along the way.

The victim of a karate blow often dies three to five years later. Funakoshi admits there is some truth to the story that it shortens a victim's life. For example, breaking a stack of boards or tiles often shows no sign of damage to the first board while those below break. Similarly, a man's body may have internal injuries but show no external damage. Gichin recalls the police ask him to warn students to use karate legally. They fear that hoodlum gangs of karateka may form. He is proud that his students do not use their skills illegally or to settle personal differences. Gichin reinforces the idea that karate is a matter of life and death that should not be used offensively. The "karate chop" that popular wrestlers use is an exaggerated version of a "shuto" or sword hand of karate that can instantly kill a man.

Funakoshi is often asked his secret of reaching ninety years of age in good health and spirits. He claims to have no secret except moderation and describes some of his daily habits. He eats frugally and never enough to be full. Vegetables are his favorite but he likes meat and fish that he eats occasionally. Gichin never has more than one bowl of soup and one side dish. He eats his meals hot in summer and cold in winter. Funakoshi dresses light and does not use heaters even in winter. He sleeps on a thin mat with a single quilt in a rented house. His room is upstairs so he can train his leg muscles by climbing stairs. He rises early and cleans up his own room, exercises and washes before breakfast. Gichin naps before noon and spends afternoons reading or doing calligraphy learned as a child. He uses glasses to read and false teeth that trouble him. He never smokes or drinks and bathes daily in warm water. He walks with a gliding manner as his style not from weak knees. He travels alone and likes to walk despite offers of rides and assistance. He forgets occasionally but dismisses senility since



young people forget too. Gichin believes Karate-do is not as popular as he wants it to be so he still has work to do.

Funakoshi claims the mastery of Karate-do requires being a good, honest member of society. He believes the courtesy given to neighbors and acquaintances should be given to one's family as well. The true meaning of karate is acquired through love of self, family and friends, country and karate itself. For example, Gichin recalls the public bathhouse tale told by Seiji Noma. When Seiji responds to an attendant's formal greeting the visit becomes warmer, personal and more than just daily routine. Serious Karate-do pupils are considerate and purposeful to maintain interest and training over the long term.

Important Points

Important Points Summary and Analysis

Each of the kata, or exercises, has an inherent meaning that Funakoshi discusses at length in another book. Six rules are essential to understanding Karate-do, but rule numbered three is missing. Training is a "deadly serious" endeavor where an opponent must always be in one's mind to survive and avoid failure. Training should be performed "with both heart and soul" and no concern with theory. Mastery of one kata can take a year or more of practice to exhaustion and may lead to understanding all other kata. Avoid becoming conceited and dogmatic through bragging and showing off. See yourself as you are in order to learn from the work of others. For example, if a trainee does not seem to be doing his best reconsider your own efforts as well. Finally, the last rule is to follow the rules of ethics in public and private daily life. Karate-do is a way of life and faith in which one can never reach perfection of mind and body. A trainee should always read with the eyes of his soul, not just those of his head.

Gichin Funakoshi admits he lapses from the strict observance of his rules when he is eighty years old. He is more active then and stays late at a party before catching the last train to Tokyo. He has some distance to walk home from the train station through a dangerous area when it begins to rain. A figure in black leaps out from behind a telephone pole to grab for his umbrella. Funakoshi bows politely before realizing the man is a thief but amateurish. The thief demands a cigarette but Gichin claims he does not smoke, so the attacker demands his "furoshiki" or knapsack, which contains an empty lunchbox and some books. Gichin refuses. The thief grabs his umbrella to swing at him. Funakoshi ducks and grabs the thief's testicle which makes him yell. A police officer arrests the thief. Funakoshi is ashamed of himself for breaking his rule to never take the offensive.

Karate stands out because anyone can practice it and learn it, whether they are young, old, strong or weak, male or female, with opponents or without. Progress in practice requires an opponent for sparring but not at the beginning. Many more women begin to practice the art than before. Gichin believes graceful movements of the kata are like dancing that appeal to women. Funakoshi also claims a wife trained in karate may be more obedient to her husband since courtesy is exercised in karate. The practice may contribute to the appearance and health of girls and young women. The skill can be used for self-defense. Gichin does not recommend taking risks in dangerous areas. He proposes a paradox that trainees do karate not for strength but to see their weakness and develop true courage.



The Past, the Future

The Past, the Future Summary and Analysis

Funakoshi claims a misconception that weapons of karate are only the hands, arms, feet and legs. He identifies by name ten weapons alone from the wrist down. Similarly he identifies more weapons from the ankle down as well as other parts of the body. Most frequent use is made of the basic fist, or "seiken." Configuration of the thumb, knuckles and wrist are important to avoid injury and gain strength and power. Gichin considers the seiken as the heart of karate that should be practiced daily with the "makiwara." The makiwara is a thick post seven feet tall and six inches wide covered with rice straw. It is anchored in the ground so the top is at the practitioner's shoulders. The trainee stands in front close enough for his fist to reach it. The legs in his stance must be firmly positioned to maintain balance and bring the strength of his body to the seiken. A trainee practicing for exercise does not need a makiwara because striking is not essential. Other important punches include back fist with knuckles of the first and second fingers, hammer-fist with the palm of the hand, spear hand with fingertips and many others like a shuto previously described. "Empi" or elbows are used as are leg and foot motions. "Koshi" for sole of the foot and "enju" for heel are used but are dangerous with inadequate power or balance.

Funakoshi wrestles as a youth, which he credits with giving him the muscular strength he finds useful in karate. Okinawan wrestling is called "tegumi," which is simpler and more primitive than karate. Several weapons are prohibited in tegumi including fists, kicking with feet or legs, hair-pulling, pinching and the sword hand and elbow blow. Tegumi participants are fully dressed and can wrestle anywhere without special facilities. Bouts begin like sumo wrestling with participants facing and pushing each other until grappling and throwing begins. The referees are boys that act as seconds to assist opponents. A fight can be stopped by a second who pats the body of an opponent. Funakoshi finds that tegumi is beneficial for karate training because multiple opponents are involved. Gichin worries that tegumi's popularity may expose young children to the danger of exploding bombs or shells left over from the Pacific War.

Few non-Japanese are exposed to karate before the war. Occupation after the war brings a number of American soldiers to Funakoshi for karate instruction. He is introduced to an American publisher staying at the Imperial Hotel. He is surprised at Gichin's age and the apparent benefits of karate to longevity. Funakoshi meets many more Americans and others who are interested in his karate demonstration. An American commander respects him for any former students who are also wartime pilots and lose their lives. Funakoshi is asked to tour mainland bases demonstrating Karate-do to Americans. A childhood activity he learns secretly is known all over the world through his efforts and replies to continuing requests for information.



Characters

Gichin Funakoshi

Gichin Funakoshi is the name of the author and subject of this book. This is an autobiography of his life during which he develops and promotes Karate-do as a way of life. Gichin is the main character writing this story as a ninety-year-old Okinawan man looking back on his life and accomplishments. He is born in 1868 and dies in 1957. A disciple writes a Foreword to introduce Gichin Funakoshi commenting on his gratitude to be a disciple and only regrets that "he is no longer with us." Gichin's actions and words depict him as a man of impeccable integrity and honesty. Ironically his story begins with a lie about his official birth date.

The Meiji Restoration begins in the year of his birth which must be 1870 or later to enter medical school. His proud family heritage as a shizoku demands wearing the Samurai topknot hairstyle. On this point, despite another Meiji demand to cut it off for medical school, Gichin does not relent. He attends school to become an instructor while wearing his topknot. Irony surrounds him as a sickly child cared for by grandparents that "coddled and pampered" him. Gichin grows into a strong man younger than twenty with bulging biceps. He braves the howling winds of a typhoon on the roof of a house to strengthen body and soul. He refuses a medical career to keep a topknot for his family's honor, then cuts it off to become a teacher which angers them anyway. Gichin lies about a birth date to obey Meiji rule that he violates at night to learn karate. Later he is required as a teacher with karate experience to cut off the topknots of obstinate pupils who also know karate.

Gichin's family is in the shizoku class. His grandfather is a Confucian scholar who gives his inheritance to Gichin's father. His father is an accomplished stick fighter, singer and dancer who drinks too much. Gichin marries at twenty years old. He supports his wife, parents, grandparents and himself on teacher's pay of three yen monthly. His wife is diligent, weaves "kasuri" to help out and grows vegetables. She encourages his students to practice correctly when he is away.

Gichin is a kind, thoughtful and ascetic man sensitive to the needs of others and traditions of his family. For example, when his mother is old and bedridden and he is the only son, so he honors his duty to care for her. While taking a jinriksha ride Gichin thinks he recognizes the driver but is too polite to ask his name. He is kind to children who call him "snake gourd" and laughs at his own smooth and ruddy-skinned complexion in the mirror. Funakoshi is a humble and practical man who is not too proud to trade his services. He works as a gardener and the "elderly man who sweeps the ground" for his accommodations at the dormitory despite a reputation as the "noted karate expert, Gichin Funakoshi." He names his karate dojo Shoto which means "pine waves" in Japanese for the rustle of pines as the wind breezes through the trees. At his young-appearing age of seventy, Gichin begins a project to organize the dojo and a set of rules. Gichin admits lapsing from strict observance of rules when he is eighty years old.



He lives to ninety years old in good health and spirits from moderate lifestyle and his daily habits.

Yasutsune Azato

Yasutsune Azato is the name of the first master Funakoshi learns from to become a karateka, or student of karate. Gichin meets Azato's son in school. At the time, Azato is one of Okinawa's greatest karate experts. He agrees to teach Gichin the illegal sport secretly at night. The famous swordsman Kanna inspires Azato to compare the arms and legs he uses in karate to swords. Azato praises Gichin for understanding karate's true spirit by offering a prayer for the stolen cakes at his father-in-law's altar. Azato compliments Gichin when he avoids falling in the water by leaping aboard a ship. Funakoshi seeks and relies on counsel of Azato for help and ideas in his book and school projects. Gichin admires Azato for not envying other masters. Azato is dead when Gichin's Shoto-kan opens in 1936.

Yasutsune Itosu

Yasutsune Itosu is the name of another and fellow master of Azato that Funakoshi studies with, sometimes at the same time. Gichin admires both Azato and Itosu for their lack of jealousy about other masters and their exceptional training ability. Itosu teaches that the essence of Karate-do lets a man win by losing. Gichin and fellow students join Master Itosu on a moon-viewing party late one evening. On their way home they are about to be attacked by a group of men. Itosu instructs his students to avoid a confrontation because the gang is untrained in karate. Gichin relies on Itosu's advice in Gichin's book and school projects. Gichin has a bittersweet experience since Itosu is no longer alive when he opens Shoto-kan in 1936.

Master Matsumura

Master Matsumura is the name of another master of karate that Gichin admires and tells a story about to reveal the true meaning of karate. Matsumura enters an engraving shop when the shopkeeper politely asks if he is Matsumura and would teach him karate. Matsumura is going through a bad period in his life after losing an important client. Consequently he tells the engraver he no longer teaches karate. The engraver is a well-known karate expert himself so he requests a match and they meet the next day. The engraver begins an attack on Matsumura that he repels by staring at his eyes without moving. Matsumura does this three times with his eye and thundering voice alone. Matsumura learns his vanity alone is an obstacle to life. Matsumura soon regains his former position.



Gichin's wife

Gichin's wife is unnamed. She is a devout Buddhist who follows a tradition that requires veneration of ancestors. Gichin marries at an "older" age of twenty because his family is poor. He supports his wife and the rest of his family on his teacher's pay of three yen a month. His wife is diligent, weaves "kasuri" for extra money and grows vegetables. She supports his karate endeavor by encouraging his students to practice in their garden when Gichin is away. She lives much of her life apart from Gichin. He moves to Tokyo, but she stays behind to honor her religious duty in Okinawa. She supports and encourages Gichin to concentrate his efforts on his work. Gichin rejoins his wife in Kyushu when the Japanese emperor surrenders, though neither have any relatives there. Living as a refugee from Okinawa is difficult. Her health deteriorates from chronic asthma until she can hardly breathe. When she dies the village arranges for her cremation, which illustrates how much they honor her even as a refugee in a strange land.

Shintaro Ogawa

Shintaro Ogawa is the name of the commissioner of schools. He attends a karate demonstration. After viewing a demonstration, he writes a report accepted by the Ministry of Education. His report makes karate popular and acceptable as a physical education course in many school's curriculum.

Sueyoshi

Sueyoshi is the name of a well-known expert in karate and stick fighting. He is Gichin's senior and has his own bojitsu school. Sueyoshi falls on bad economic times. For extra money he sells jinriksha rides at night. Gichin hires a jinriksha that Sueyoshi pulls. When Gichin recognizes him, Sueyoshi denies it is he but then admits he is Sueyoshi and drops to his knees. Sueyoshi is from an upper-class family that is descended from warriors. Sueyoshi asks Gichin not to reveal that he farms in the day and drives at night to earn enough for his sick wife's medicine. Gichin believes Sueyoshi represents the perfect embodiment of samurai spirit

Jigoro Kano

Jigoro Kano is the name of the judo master in Tokyo. He requests Gichin to perform a karate demonstration. After attending the demonstration he asks for instruction from Gichin to teach him a few basic kata.



Huan Kosugi

Huan Kosugi is the name of a painter and president of the Tabata Poplar Club. After seeing a karate demonstration he asks for instruction from Gichin in Tokyo. Huan also encourages Gichin to write a reference book on Karate-do. Kosugi offers to design the book, which Gichin thinks he does beautifully.

Grand Champion Onishiki

Grand Champion Onishiki is the name of a sumo wrestler who trains with Funakoshi. Gichin is impressed with his propriety. Gichin finds the shared goal of karate and sumo wrestling to be training body and mind.

Hiromichi Nakayama

Hiromichi Nakayama is the name of a fencing instructor in Tokyo. He is a friend of Gichin who offers him temporary training quarters for his karate classes while Tokyo begins to rebuild from the earthquake.



Objects/Places

Meiji Restoration

Meiji Restoration is the name of a political movement that begins in 1870 in Edo, which is the name of a city in Japan now called Tokyo. The Meiji Restoration is opposed by many traditional Japanese citizens who object to their cultural rules. For example, the Meiji administration requires applicants who sit for the medical school entrance exams to have been born in 1870 or later regardless of their actual age. In addition the Meiji government bans the practice of karate.

Shuri

Shuri is the name of the capital of Okinawa where Funakoshi is born in 1868. Shuri is located in the Yamakawa-cho district of Okinawa.

Topknot

Topknot is the name of a hairstyle that is the traditional samurai style. The topknot is forbidden by the Meiji Restoration for anyone who wants to begin a medical career. The Funakoshi family favors the traditional topknot so Gichin goes along with them by keeping his topknot rather than entering medical school. Later he becomes a teacher and cuts his topknot, which angers them anyway.

Shizoku

Shizoku is the name of the class to which the Funakoshi family belongs. Members of this social class are required to learn Four Chinese Classics and Five Chinese Classics of Confucian tradition.

Kata

Kata is the name of karate practices or exercises. Each kata has a specific name, description and style of learning. For example, nukite is the name of a presumed and exaggerated kata that describes penetrating a man's rib cage with five fingers of one hand to tear out his rib bones. The progressive method of training for this kata is prescribed to use casks of beans, sand, pebbles and finally lead pellets to build up strength of the hand and fingers. Each kata, or exercise, has an inherent meaning that Funakoshi discusses in his books.



Obstinate Party

Obstinate Party is the name of the political party in Okinawa that opposes cutting the topknot and other political actions of the Meiji administration.

Ministry of Education

Ministry of Education is the name of the agency in Okinawa that requires karate instructors to cut the topknot of obstinate students following the regulations of the Meiji government.

Ryukyu Islands

Ryukyu Islands are the name of a small kingdom in the Far East that is currently known as Okinawa. The Islands are recalled by Napoleon because they have no weapons and presumably are where the martial art of karate originates.

Karate

Karate is a martial art whose origin is uncertain except in a small kingdom without weapons called Okinawa. They trade with southern China where boxing evolves into karate or Chinese boxing. Okinawan folk dances bring courtesy to karate bouts. Gichin calls warrior's hands "empty" since karate uses no weapons.

Nawate and Shurite

Nawate and Shurite are the names of divergent schools of karate that are thought to be related to the Chinese Wutang school name after the Chinese mountains where it is initially practiced.

Shuri Castle

Shuri Castle is the name of a castle in the capital city of Okinawa where Gichin leads a demonstration in karate for the crown prince who later becomes emperor.

Okinawa Association for the Spirit of the Martial Arts

Okinawa Association for the Spirit of the Martial Arts is the name of the organization that Gichin Funakoshi forms to develop and promote karate.



Habu

Habu is the name of a poisonous snake that Gichin claims understands the spirit of karate. He tells his young son that the snake understands because it does not run away from them but hides in the field where it prepares to attack again.

Ochaya Goten

Ochaya Goten is the name of a public villa where students accompany Master Itosu on a moon-viewing party one evening. They stay later than expected. On their way home to Shuri they find themselves about to be attacked by a group of men. The Master tells his students to find a different way home rather than using karate to confront the untrained men that apologize to him the next day.

Hand wrestling

Hand wrestling is the name of a sport Gichin enjoys and is confident of his skill. Fans watching a bout invite and insist on his participation. He wins five bouts in a row. Gichin wants to leave but agrees to fight again to win six bouts. Gichin is remorseful for violating the spirit of Karate-do by overconfidence in his strength

Bengadake

Bengadake is the name of a forest where a thief rushes past Gichin into a field of sugarcane. Gichin hears no more sound from the field. He tries to help but finds no trace of him until he gets to a cesspool where Gichin sees him in the muck.

Motobe

Motobe is the name of a coastal village in conflict with the nearby hamlet of Shaka in Kokuryo County. The conflict comes from Okinawan gentry who settle the Shaka area but oppose the Tokyo regime. Police cannot resolve a continuing political dispute so they refer the matter to Naha. Gichin is on faculty of a school in Chuto County but he wants a transfer to Naha that mediating may get for him.

Jinriksha

Jinriksha is the name of a cart for pulling passengers to a destination. Gichin usually walks but one rainy evening he hires one to get home.



Tug of War

Tug of war is the name of a popular sport played during festivals. Two lengths of rope are joined as one with a loop at one end. The sport starts when a referee stamps on the feet of the closest man on each team. The sport is an imitation of war and battles develop with fistfights.

Naha

Naha is the name of a port so shallow that large ships must anchor away from the pier to avoid grounding. Boarding passengers are ferried out by a small boat where they board the large ship's gangway. Gichin ferries out one day where he leaps to the gangway to avoid falling in the water since he cannot swim.

Meisei Juku

Meisei Juku is the name of an Okinawan dormitory where Gichin finds temporary quarters. He can stay for services in trade and some pay and teach karate. Gichin enjoys his different roles in trade as gardener, "the elderly man who sweeps the ground" and laughs when children playing in the garden call him "snake gourd."

Gichin's First Book

Gichin's first book is published in 1922 including comments by many eminent people in the foreword section. Hoan Kosugi designs it beautifully. Funakoshi now considers the writing in his five-chapter book to be amateurish. He quotes the introduction stating "This first attempt is, of course, flawed by many defects." A second edition is issued four years later and a second book is published in 1935.

The Great Kanto Earthquake

The Great Kanto Earthquake is the name of an earthquake that strikes Tokyo on September 1, 1923. Fires rage through the wooden buildings after the quake that reduces the capital to ruin. Many of Gichin's students vanish in the holocaust.

Geta

"Geta" is the name of wooden sandals Gichin wears to strengthen his leg muscles.



Shoto-kan

Shoto-kan is the name of the first karate dojo in Japan that Gichin builds in 1936 from funds raised by 1935. It is named Shoto-kan which is the pen name that Funakoshi uses as a young man for penning his youthful Chinese poems. The name Shoto means "pine waves" in Japanese from a rustle of pines breezing through the trees.

Karate Charge

"Karate charge" is the name of the action given to those unable to carry a rifle or sword in battle. For example, they are told to "karate charge" the enemy.

Karate Chop

"Karate chop" is the name given to the action used by popular wrestlers that is a variation of the "shuto" or sword hand of karate. The shuto can instantly kill a man and is much less exaggerated but more intense than a karate chop.

Weapons of Karate

Weapons of karate are identified by Funakoshi to include the hands, arms, feet and legs and other weapons that use extensions of those body parts. For example, he identifies by name ten weapons alone from the wrist down. The most frequent use is made of the basic fist, or "seiken." "Empi" or elbows are used as are leg and foot motions. "Koshi" for sole of the foot and "enju" for heel are also used.

Makiwara

Makiwara is the name of a training tool that is a thick post seven feet tall and six inches wide covered with rice straw. It is anchored in the ground so the top is at a practitioner's shoulders. A trainee stands close enough for his weapon to hit it.

Tegumi

"Tegumi" is the name given to Okinawan wrestling that is simpler and more primitive than karate. Several weapons are prohibited from use including fists, kicking with feet or legs, hair-pulling, pinching, and the sword hand and elbow blow. Participants are fully dressed and can wrestle anywhere without special facilities.



Themes

Learning Lessons

Throughout "Karate-do" Gichin emphasizes the value and benefits of his life practicing karate. He recalls experiences that illustrate lessons learned from karate. Alternatively, he highlights how the practice of karate strengthens and improves his ability to deal with life's events. For example, Gichin decides to perfect an exercise to strengthen his body and mind called the horse-riding stance. Like a modern-day extreme athlete, however, he practices under the extreme condition of holding a straw mat against the wind on his roof top in a howling typhoon. Gichin believes Karate trains a man to perform extraordinary feats by daily practice that is invaluable in an emergency.

On the other hand when he does face an emergency with other karate students he learns to use the same training in an extraordinary but unexpected way. When their party is threatened by a gang, Itosu demonstrates the meaning of karate by avoiding rather than confronting the untrained men. Confrontation cannot be avoided by real thieves who take the cake Gichin plans to offer. Gichin offers prayers instead and Azato praises him for understanding the true spirit of karate. Funakoshi reconciles two groups who are in conflict and ready to do battle. He attributes his training in karate to enable successful mediation.

Gichin is able to learn and apply positive and negative lessons from karate. When he wins six hand-wrestling bouts or is attacked by seven or eight men to defend against he gets remorseful. Gichin believes he violates the spirit of Karate-do by overconfidence in his strength. Another thief takes his umbrella to hit him. Funakoshi ducks to grab the thief's testicles which makes him cry out. Funakoshi is ashamed because he violates his own rule to never take the offensive. An apparent and consistent irony in the practice of karate is illustrated by a snake that understands the spirit of karate because it retreats to prepare to attack again. Gichin believes those who are intent on winning usually fail but those who are just enjoying the sport succeed in karate.

Six Rules of the Road

The author proposes six rules to be followed that give strength, endurance and meaning to his life practicing karate. Six rules are mentioned but rule number three is not listed. Apparently that numbered rule is lost in translation, although the section where it should appear has sufficient content to support what may be rule number three. Gichin claims these six rules are essential for a man to understand the nature of the art of Karate-do.

1. "You must be deadly serious in training." Training in karate requires the opponent must always be in one's mind to survive and avoid failure. Funakoshi claims one blow decides everything in combat. The length of time in training is not significantly different from the time required to learn to dance. However, the intent of learning must be serious



to grasp the essence of Karate-do. The requirement to be deadly serious is essential in everyone's life, not just for karate practitioners. Life itself is a struggle to survive.

2. "Train with both heart and soul without worrying about theory." Someone who practices without deadly seriousness may mistake theory for understanding. Mastery of one kata, which can take a year or more of practice to exhaustion, may contribute to understanding all other kata. True practice requires the whole body be involved. The learning acquired by listening is not remembered like listening and learning with practice through the whole body. Learning with the whole body is remembered for all one's life.

3. This rule is unnumbered although this part of the Six Rules section tells the story of a famous master while he is a novice struggling to learn. This part is about persistence and diligence in study that leads to greater understanding. The novice leaves a demanding master and enters a competition. He must recite a passage he practices for the demanding master over many years. He knows the passage so well that he wins. He admits he is a novice and left his master. The contest manager encourages him to return to his master.

4. "Avoid self-conceit and dogmatism." Someone who brags shows off and swaggers can never earn true respect regardless of his capabilities. Generally, beginners are more inclined to show off or brag, which shows lack of respect to himself and his practice.

5. "Try to see yourself as you truly are and try to adopt what is meritorious in the work of others." When observing others practice, notice strong points and try to incorporate them in your own technique. Alternatively, if a trainee does not seem to be doing his best, reconsider your own efforts as well. The wise man tries to see the good or bad in others. He tries to follow the good habits and avoid the bad.

6. "Abide by the rules of ethics in your daily life, whether in public or private." This rule demands strict observance. Some novices make enough progress to overtake their instructor. Teachers should show respect to trainees who might one day overtake them in karate or other skills. Karate-do is a way of life and faith in which one can never reach perfection of mind and body. Success requires the help of others and cannot be reached alone. A trainee should always read with the eyes of his soul not just those in his head.

Lifestyle of Gichin

Gichin Funakoshi is an ascetic man who dedicates his whole life to the practice and development of Karate-do. He lives a life of moderation and physical discipline in order to maintain and develop his career, personality and skills. He is not a rich man and lives simply without extravagance. His wealth lies in his wisdom and personal spirituality. He has a strong and well-developed physical presence as the ninety-year old photographs inserted between pages 64 and 65 illustrate. He lives apart from his wife by mutual



understanding through much of their married life. He is at her side at death and they have children. He dies at the age of ninety.

Funakoshi is often asked his secret of reaching ninety years of age in good health and spirits. He claims no secrets except moderation and describes some of his daily habits. He eats small amounts and never enough to be full. He likes vegetables and occasionally eats meat and fish that he likes as well. Gichin maintains discipline in his meals and never has more than one bowl of soup and one side dish. In the summertime he eats hot meals and in the wintertime his meals are cold.

Funakoshi wears light clothing. He claims to not use heaters in winters and sleeps on a thin mat with a single quilt. He lives in a rented house with a room upstairs so he can train his leg muscles by climbing stairs. He gets up early and follows a regular schedule. After rising he cleans up his own room and exercises. He washes before breakfast and naps before noon. During the afternoon he reads or does calligraphy. He uses glasses to read but not to do calligraphy. His false teeth trouble him. He never smokes or drinks. He bathes daily in warm water.

He travels alone and likes to walk in a gliding manner from style not weak knees. Many friends and acquaintances offer him rides and assistance. His memory fails on occasion but he does not consider himself senile since younger people forget too. Funakoshi is sociable and enjoys young karate students. Karate-do is not as popular as he wants it to be so he keeps working. He believes Karate trains a man to perform extraordinary feats like other martial arts and requires daily practice. Funakoshi believes the mastery of Karate-do requires one to become a good, honest member of society. He believes that courtesy given to neighbors and acquaintances should be given to one's family as well.



Style

Perspective

The author is a teacher for more than thirty years and a member of the shizoku class. As a young man he meets Azato's son at school whose father at the time is a master in the illegal practice of karate. Gichin learns karate from Master Azato and Master Itosu, as well as other masters. Gichin dedicates his life to the practice and instruction of karate. This book is one of many he writes to research, explore, explain and promote Karate-do. Gichin opens the first school of karate in Japan in 1936.

The intended audience for his book is the interested karate devotee. His hope and goal of this book is to promote karate by spreading information, training and knowledge of karate through the world. He writes his first two books by 1935. This book written in 1956 has a 1975 Copyright as the retrospective story of Funakoshi's life from the perspective of a ninety-year-old man. This book presents his life as a Master of karate which is the story of his life. He writes it to share with anyone interested in karate and his lifestyle. The book and story serve as a model and motivating character of his life, struggles and times.

Tone

KARATE-DO: MY WAY OF LIFE is written in first person subjective as an autobiographical story of his life devoted to karate. His writing is simple and straightforward with little apparent embellishment or hyperbole. Gichin is a dedicated, simple, honest man whose principles are told in story form. The lessons Gichin learns are presented as parables with no philosophical overtone. For example, he tells how Matsumura defeats the engraver by looking into his eye and thundering voice without movement or blow. Funakoshi does not verbalize the point he makes that the spirit of karate is its most powerful weapon.

Funakoshi is an admirable man whose honesty and innocence is presented in simple words and expressions. He is not sophisticated yet he is wise in the ways of the world. He presents the model of a kind, caring gentle man growing patiently through trials and tribulations of professional life as karate master. His writing motivates the reader to learn about this man and the art of karate develops. Gichin attributes the success he has in life to his belief in karate and the lessons it teaches. For example Gichin is confronted by thieves who want his money or his tobacco. Since he has neither they take the cakes he plans to offer at his father-in-law's altar. Gichin tells his masters he offers prayer for the cakes instead. Master Azato praises his beginning to understand the true spirit of karate.



Structure

KARATE-DO: MY WAY OF LIFE is a 127 page non-fiction autobiographical sketch of the life and times of Gichin Funakoshi as a karate master. The author promotes karate from its days of Meiji illegality in 1870 to world-wide popularity today. Front matter of the book is comprised of Contents, Forward and Preface that introduce the seven following chapters, a photo page insert, and no back matter. Chapters are unnumbered but titled including chapter subsections and topical subtitles. Chapters range in size from eleven to twenty-four pages long. The photo page is inserted between pages 64 and 65.

Clarity is enhanced by the format which uses names like "Entering the Way" and "One Life." Subsection topical subtitles add colorful description to the chapter with phrases like "Losing a Topknot" and "Recognizing Nonsense." The Foreword is written by one of his disciples, Genshin Hironishi, President of Japan Karate-do Shoto-kai. The Preface is written by Gichin Funakoshi in 1956, one year before his death. He appears in a photo after page 64 and his strength is illustrated in a picture of his bicep on the following page. Gichin Funakoshi's writing is wise in its simplicity and sensitivity. For example, he is deeply aware of karate's life lessons in his comment about the snake preparing for attack, "That habu understands very well the spirit of karate."



Quotes

"Master Azato not only was unsurpassed in all Okinawa in the art of karate but also excelled in horsemanship, in Japanese fencing (kendo), and in archery. He was, moreover, a brilliant scholar. It was my good fortune to be brought to his attention and eventually to receive my first instructions in karate at his remarkable hands." Chapter 1, Entering the Way, pg. 3

"The fact is that the karate enthusiast who overstates and exaggerates and indeed perverts the nature of the art is a skillful conversationalist, true enough, and he will certainly succeed in fascinating his listeners and convincing them that karate is something frightful. But what he is saying is utterly untrue, and furthermore he knows it. As to why he does it - well, it sounds good." Chapter 1, Entering the Way, pg. 9

"Today I'm a wiser man than I was yesterday. I'm a human being, and a human being is a vulnerable creature, who cannot possibly be perfect. After he dies, he returns to the elements - to earth, to water, to fire, to wind, to air. Matter is void. All is vanity. We are like blades of grass or trees of the forest, creations of the universe, of the spirit of the universe, and the spirit of the universe has neither life nor death. Vanity is the only obstacle to life" Chapter 2, No Weapons, pg. 28

"Unlike me, my father was tall and handsome. He was expert at stick fighting (bojitsu), and an accomplished singer and dancer, but he possessed one unfortunate defect. He was a heavy drinker, and that, I suspect, is how and why Gifuku's legacy gradually made its way out of our family's hands. The house we lived in, even when I was a child, was always a rented one." Chapter 2, No Weapons, pg. 39

"It seemed to me that I had learned an important lesson from that viper. As we continued on our way toward Azato's house, I said to my son, 'We all know about the habu's persistence. But this time that was not the danger. The habu we encountered appears to be familiar with the tactics of karate, and when it slid off into the field it was not running away from us. It was preparing for an attack. That habu understands very well the spirit of karate.'" Chapter 3, Training for Life, pg. 48

"A month later, I was called to the Educational Affairs Section of the Okinawa prefectural government, where I was informed that I had been promoted to a school in central Naha. What I had so dearly longed for had finally come to pass, and I could only attribute it to my training in karate, which had proved so useful in my mediation efforts." Chapter 3, Training for Life, pg. 62

"And it was not without its lighter moments. In those days, personal interviews in newspapers and magazines were rare, but one day a newspaper reporter appeared at the dormitory. As he approached, I happened to be sweeping the garden path, and he obviously took me for a servant." Chapter 4, Recognition, pg. 71



"In addition to Onishiki and Fukuyanagi, there were half a dozen other famous wrestlers who studied karate with me, and I found that I learned much from them even as I was teaching them. My conclusion was that the ultimate aim of both karate and sumo was the same: the training of both body and mind." Chapter 4, Recognition, pg. 81

"How does this come about? No doubt all my readers have seen photographs of karateka breaking boards or tiles with a blow of their bare hands. Generally the first board or tile remains undamaged while those beneath are the ones that get broken; the board that actually receives the blow shows no sign of having been struck." Chapter 5, One Life, pg. 92

"Sometimes men whom I taught decades ago visit me when they come to Tokyo. Of course they recall me quite vividly, but the numbers of my former students run into the tens of thousands. So frequently I do not know what to call them, and am forced to fall back on that standard phrase, 'How tall you have grown!'" Chapter 5, One Life, pg. 100

"I am convinced that it will. I am convinced that if young people practice karate with all their heart and all their soul, they will eventually arrive at an understanding of my words. He who is aware of his own weaknesses will remain master of himself in any situation; only a true weakling is capable of true courage. Naturally, a real karate adept must refine his technique through training, but he must never forget that only through training will he be able to recognize his own weaknesses." Chapter 6, Important Points, pg. 115

"So Karate-do which in my childhood, was a clandestine local Okinawan activity, had finally become one of Japan's martial arts before it took wings and flew to America. Now it is known all over the world. As I write these notes, I receive requests for information, and for instructors too, from everywhere. Still astonished by the number of people who have heard about karate, I now realize that once this book is finished I shall have to start a new project - that of sending Japanese karate experts abroad." Chapter 7, The Past, the Future, pg. 127



Topics for Discussion

Identify elements of and describe the topknot significance and controversy. Discuss similar political issues in the transition of political parties.

Identify, list and describe at least five significant events that lead to the development and popularity of karate that Funakoshi recalls.

Identify, list and describe at least five experiences Gichin recounts that provide him the opportunity to explain how karate gives him training for life.

Identify, describe and discuss the initial experiences serving in different roles that Gichin has in his temporary quarters at Meisei Juku.

Describe and discuss the origination, timing and development of Gichin's first and second books.

Describe and discuss the significance of the name Funakoshi gives to his karate dojo in Japan that is also his pen-name as a young man.

Identify, list and describe the main elements of Funakoshi's moderate lifestyle. Identify and explain how three or more changes can be implemented in your own life that follows his model of living a moderate life.

Identify, list and describe Funakoshi's six rules. Discuss how these rules can be implemented in the daily life of an American student.

Identify, list and describe ten weapons of karate that Funakoshi describes starting from the wrist down.

Describe, discuss and provide examples that illustrate the paradoxical nature of using karate with untrained opponents. How does this compare to a professional boxer in a "street fight?"