

Teacher

Takeda Sōkaku

- Takeda Sōkaku (October 10, 1859 – April 25, 1943) was known as the **founder of a school of jujutsu known as Daitō-ryū Aiki-jūjutsu**.
- Born in the Aizu domain and grew up in the time of the Boshin War.
- Second son of Takeda Sōkichi, a samurai of the Takeda clan who worked his farm and taught at a local school in a Buddhist temple. His mother, Tomi Kurokochi, was a daughter of Dengoro Kurokochi, a Yari and Kenjutsu master. It is believed that Sōkaku received his first martial arts training from his father who had a dojo on their property. Sōkichi was apparently expert in the use of both sword and spear, and had once been a sumo wrestler of ozeki rank. It is believed that Sōkaku was exposed to the teachings of Hōzōin-ryū Takada-ha and Ono-ha Ittō-ryū, schools of spear and swordsmanship respectively.
- Sōkaku then left to go on a period of austere training where he travelled, fought and trained at the schools of many teachers, a not uncommon practise of the time. Reputedly, Sōkaku spent some time as a live-in student of Kenkichi Sakakibara, headmaster of the Jikishinkage-ryū and considered to be one of the most famous and skilled swordsmen of the era. Unfortunately there exist no known historical documents to confirm this relationship and so it is a matter of debate. What is known, however, is that Sōkaku engaged in many matches and duels with both shinai and live blades and was considered a swordsman of great skill in a period of time when such things were beginning to be forgotten.
- With the outlawing of the samurai class and the prohibition against carrying swords (Haitōrei Edict) apparently Sokaku decided to emphasize the empty handed, jujutsu oriented, techniques of his ancestor's art. These apparently were 'oshiki-uchi', or secret teachings of the Aizu clan, up to that point. These, along with other skills he had acquired, were combined to create an art which he named first 'Daitō-ryū jūjutsu' and later 'Daitō-ryū Aiki-jūjutsu'.
- In about 1875, rumor reached Sōkaku that Saigō Takamori had launched his rebellion in Satsuma against the forces of the new Meiji government. He decided immediately that he would go to lend his support. He made it as far as Kyushu but was unable to reach his destination, so he returned to Osaka where he spent the next ten years as a guest in the Kyōshin Meichi-ryū dojo of swordsman Momonoi Shunzo.
- Sōkaku lived a somewhat itinerant life, travelling the length and breadth of the country giving seminars in martial arts to military officers, police officers and martial arts enthusiasts, often of high social standing. He left extensive records of those he taught in his *eimeiroku* and *shareikoku* - attendance and fee ledgers.

Kanō Jigorō

- Kanō Jigorō (10 December 1860 – 4 May 1938) was a Japanese educator, athlete, and the **founder of Judo**.
- When Kanō attended the Tokyo Imperial University in 1877, he started looking for jūjutsu teachers. He first looked for bonesetters, called *seifukushi*. His assumption was that doctors who knew the martial art were better teachers. His search brought him to Yagi Teinosuke, who had been a student of Emon Isomata in the Tenjin Shin'yō-ryū school of jūjutsu. Yagi, in turn, referred Kanō to Fukuda Hachinosuke, a bonesetter who taught Tenjin Shin'yō-ryū in a 10-mat room adjacent to his practice. Tenjin Shin'yō-ryū was itself a combination of two older schools: the Yōshin-ryū and Shin no Shindō-ryū.
- Fukuda's training method consisted mostly of the student taking fall after fall for the teacher or senior student until he began to understand the mechanics of the technique. Fukuda stressed applied technique over ritual form. He gave beginners a short description of the technique and had them engage in free practice (*randori*) in order to teach through experience. It was only after the student had attained some proficiency that he taught them traditional forms (*kata*). This method was difficult, as there were no special mats for falling, only the standard straw mats (*tatami*) laid over wooden floors.
- Kanō had trouble defeating Fukushima Kanekichi, who was one of his seniors at the school. Therefore, Kanō started trying unfamiliar techniques on his rival. He first tried techniques from sumo taught by a former practitioner named Uchiyama Kisoemon. When these did not help, he studied more, and tried a technique ("fireman's carry") that he learned from a book on western wrestling. This worked, and *kataguruma*, or "shoulder wheel", remains part of the judo repertoire, although at this moment the judo organizations of some countries prohibit this throw in competition judo.
- On 5 August 1879, Kanō participated in a jūjutsu demonstration given for former United States president Ulysses S. Grant. This demonstration took place at the home of the prominent businessman Shibusawa Eiichi. Other people involved in this demonstration included the jūjutsu teachers Fukuda Hachinosuke and Iso Masatomo, and Kanō's training partner Godai Ryusaku. Fukuda died soon after this demonstration, at the age of 52. Kanō began studying with Iso, who had been a friend of Fukuda. Despite being 62 years old and standing only 5 feet (1.52 m) tall, Iso had gained a powerful build from jujitsu training. He was known for excellence in *kata*, and was also a specialist in *atemi*, or the striking of vital areas. In Iso's method, one began with *kata* and then progressed to free fighting (*randori*). Due to Kanō's intense practice and his solid grounding in the jujitsu taught by Fukuda, he was soon an assistant at Iso's school. In 1881, Fukuda's widow gave the scrolls of the school to Kanō, then 21 years old. Some popular works suggest that Kanō obtained a teaching license in this school, but this has not been documented: no Tenjin Shin'yō-ryū certificate(s) with Kanō's name visible is depicted anywhere in the Kōdōkan museum or in any published source. Neither is such rank specified in any authentic Tenjin Shin'yō-ryū archival documents.
- While under Iso's tutelage, Kanō witnessed a demonstration by the Yōshin-ryū jūjutsu teacher Totsuka Hikosuke and later took part in *randori* with members of Totsuka's school. Kanō was impressed by the Yōshin-ryū practitioners and realized that he might never be able to beat someone as talented as Totsuka simply by training harder: he also needed to train smarter. It was this experience that first led Kanō to believe that to be truly superior, one needed to combine the best elements of several *ryū*, or schools, of jūjutsu including Yagyu Shingan-ryū Taijutsu. Toward this end, he began to seek teachers who could provide him with superior elements of jūjutsu that he could adopt.
- After Iso died in 1881, Kanō began training in Kitō-ryū with likubo Tsunetoshi (Kōnen). likubo was an expert in *kata* and throwing, and fond of *randori*. Kanō applied himself

thoroughly to learning Kitō-ryū, believing likubo's throwing techniques in particular to be better than in the schools he had previously studied. It is likubo who issued Kanō's only verified jūjutsu rank and teaching credential, namely a certificate of Menkyo (not Menkyo kaiden) in *Nihonden Kitō Jūdō*, dated October 1883.

Gichin Funakoshi

- Gichin Funakoshi (Funakoshi Gichin, November 10, 1868 – April 26, 1957) is the **founder of Shotokan karate-do**, perhaps the most widely known style of karate, and is known as a "father of modern karate". Funakoshi had trained in both of the popular styles of Okinawan karate of the time: Shōrei-ryū and Shōrin-ryū. Shotokan is named after Funakoshi's pen name, *Shōtō* , which means "waving pines". *Kan* means training hall or house, thus *Shōtōkan* referred to the "house of *Shōtō*". This name was coined by Funakoshi's students when they posted a sign above the entrance of the hall at which Funakoshi taught. In addition to being a karate master, Funakoshi was an avid poet and philosopher who would reportedly go for long walks in the forest where he would meditate and write his poetry.
- By the late 1910s, Funakoshi had many students, of which a few were deemed capable of passing on their master's teachings. Continuing his effort to garner widespread interest in Okinawan karate, Funakoshi ventured to mainland Japan in 1917, and again in 1922.
- In 1930, Funakoshi established an association named Dai-Nihon Karate-do Kenkyukai to promote communication and information exchange among people who study karate-dō. In 1936, Dai-Nippon Karate-do Kenkyukai changed its name to Dai-Nippon Karate-do Shotokai. The association is known today as Shotokai, and is the official keeper of Funakoshi's karate heritage.
- In 1936, Funakoshi built the first *Shōtōkan dojo* (training hall) in Tokyo. While on the Japanese mainland, he changed the written characters of karate to mean "empty hand" instead of "China hand" (literally Tang dynasty) to downplay its connection to Chinese boxing. Karate had borrowed many aspects from Chinese boxing. Funakoshi also argued in his autobiography that a philosophical evaluation of the use of "empty" seemed to fit as it implied a way which was not tethered to any other physical object.
- Funakoshi's re-interpretation of the character *kara* in karate to mean "empty" rather than "Chinese" caused some tension with traditionalists back in Okinawa, prompting Funakoshi to remain in Tokyo indefinitely. In 1949 Funakoshi's students created the Japan Karate Association, with Funakoshi as the honorary head of the organisation. However, in practise this organisation was led by Masatoshi Nakayama. The JKA began formalising Funakoshi's teachings.