

AS SELF-DEFENSE

Excerpt from the book: **Karate-Do Kyohan – The Master Text** by Gichin Funakoshi
Translated by Tsutomu Ohshima

Almost all living creatures have some mechanism for defending themselves, for where this development is incomplete the weaker are destroyed and perish in the fierce struggle for survival. The fangs of the tiger and lion, the talons of the eagle and the hawk, the poisonous sting of the bees and scorpions, and the thorns of the rose and Bengal quince; are these not all preparations for defense? But if the lower mammals, birds, insects, and plants each have specialization, should not man, the lord, of creation, be prepared as well? An appropriate basis for the reply to this question is provided by the statement: We should have no intention of harming other people, but we must try to keep out of harm's way. To protect oneself, one must find a method that gives the weak the power to defend themselves against stronger opponents. The power of karate has become well known in these times for its effectiveness in breaking boards or cracking stone without tools, and it is not an exaggeration to assert that a man well trained in this form of defense may consider the whole body to be a weapon of awesomely effective offensive power.

Finally, although karate does have throwing techniques, it relies principally on striking, kicking and thrusting techniques. These movements are much quicker and can escape the untrained eye. Block-attack combinations are executed simultaneously, and weaker individuals, women or young boys, do have ample strength to control a more powerful opponent with them. In short, among the advantages of karate as a means of self-defense are these: no weapons are necessary; the old the sick or women, are able to able it; and one can protect himself effectively even with natural strength. These points combine to make karate a form of self-defense without equal.

About the author; **Gichin Funakoshi** (船越 義珍 *Funakoshi Gichin*, November 10, 1868 – April 26, 1957) was the creator of Shotokan karate and is attributed as being the "father of modern karate". Following in the teachings of Anko Itosu, he was one of the Okinawan karate masters who introduced karate to the Japanese mainland in 1921.