



# Karate-Do Nyumon: The Master Introductory Text

*Gichin Funakoshi*

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*Karate-do Nyumon* literally means a passage through the gates of the Karate way-in other words, an introduction to the world of Karate. *Karate-do Nyumon* is the result of Master Funakoshi's wish to clarify Karate thought and practice for those who know nothing about it. It comprises unpublished writings from the years before his death in 1957, together with simplified kata-sequences of movements-synthesized by Funakoshi from the traditional Okinawa Karate-do kata, for beginners.

Master Funakoshi begins by exploding some of the myths of Karate:

"Karate-do is a noble martial art, and the reader can rest assured that those who take pride in breaking boards or smashing tiles, or who boast of being able to perform outlandish feats like stripping flesh or plucking out ribs, really know nothing about karate. They are playing around in the leaves and branches of a great tree, without the slightest concept of the trunk."

In his description of what Karate is, the Master describes the history of Karate-its origins in the ancient methods of unarmed combat in China, and its growth as a fighting method in Okinawa, a country where arms were banned in a succession of decrees from the Japanese mainland. In order to prevent it being subjected to control, or more importantly, to prevent the Japanese overlords from knowing and using the techniques, the practice of Karate was kept a secret. To preserve this secrecy, the habit persisted until very recent times of keeping no records. Master Funakoshi, however, recognized in this book and others the need to formulate the kata precisely, so as to establish a standard of true Okinawan Karate.

The kata in this book are not traditional kata, but they serve to establish the correct habits of stance, thought and action, and to facilitate the eventual mastery of the true Karate-do kata. All these special kata are clearly explained and illustrated by photos.

Lastly, Master Funakoshi recalls stories of men who were living legends when he was a youth in Okinawa, men whose reputations overcame even the secrecy that clung to Karate until the middle of this century.

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