



## GICHIN FUNAKOSHI - FOUNDER OF THE SHOTOKAN STYLE OF KARATE

*A brief look at his childhood*



Born 1868 in Okinawa Gichin Funakoshi was a 'sickly' child and not expected to live a very long life. His parents and grand parents decided to take special care of him and moved him from the family home to the home of his Mother's parents. There his grandfather educated him in the manner becoming of his class – SHIZOKU (upper class – samurai). People of Okinawa held tradition as very important to their way of life. Your family name was linked to your family history and this history was well known by the locality.

During his time at primary school he became good friends with the son of Yasutsume Azato. Funakoshi describes Azato as a most amazing man who was unsurpassed in all Okinawa in the art of Karate, Kendo (Japanese fencing) and horsemanship. At the age of 12 Funakoshi started learning Karate with Master Azato as his Sensei. Learning and practising Karate was not easy – the Japanese government had banned the practise of Karate so all sessions had to be held in secret and all students were forbidden to discuss with anyone that they were learning the art of Karate. Most lessons were held in secret and at night. With no public transport or street lighting the young Funakoshi would have to walk a fair distance with just a lantern to keep him company.

*Next time we will look at how Funakoshi trained as a young boy.*

### CAN YOU FIND THE WORDS

**Gedan Berai**  
Age Uke  
**Soto Uke**  
Uch iUke  
**Morote Uke**  
Shuto Uke  
**Haiwan Uke**  
Kosa Uke  
**Juj iUke**

E P E R R K E T I Z N K  
E E F D G K O J E H E I  
E K S H U T O U K E J E  
I O U E A M Y J U N E P  
I P G O I O V I N O U K  
V A U O T R K U A P L F  
H I C A C O I K W H O A  
S G H E S T S E I I O A  
T I I A R E B N A D E G  
A M U A S U H S H A H O  
S K K N I K A B I R N C  
E F E V N E E E C I R I

### CAN YOU MATCH THE WORDS

**Gedan Berai**  
**Age Uke**  
**Soto Uke**  
**Uch iUke**  
**Morote Uke**  
**Shuto Uke**  
**Haiwan Uke**  
**Hidari**  
**Migi**  
**Kosa Uke**  
**Juj iUke**

Knifehand Block  
Right  
Lower Block  
Inside Forearm Block  
'X' Block  
Left  
Back Arm Block  
Rising Block  
Outside Forearm Block  
Crossed Arms Block  
Augmented Block