

INTRODUCTION:

Describing the history and development of **Goju-Ryu karatedo** has always been a precarious matter. Until recently no one seemed engaged in it. One referred to *Kanryo Higaonna*, the Okinawan who learned Chinese martial arts in Fuzhou, the capital city of Fujian province in China, during the second half of the 19th century.

However recently (1996) this has changed. A book solemnly dedicated to the history of **Goju-Ryu karate-do** was written by *Morio Higaonna*, the world's leading authority on Traditional Okinawan Goju-ryu. In writing history there is always the danger to lean so heavily upon the work of previous writers that one's own becomes but a digest of theirs, replete with the mistakes and prejudices of the earlier generation. The author has avoided this predicament by using only primary sources of information: the family, students, and friends of the founders of Goju-Ryu karate, *Kanryo Higaonna* and *Chojun Miyagi*. To the evidence he has collected from the interviews conducted over the past thirty years, he has added the fruits of his extensive research in Okinawa, Japan and China during the same period. Not surprisingly, the book that has resulted from this gargantuan effort is now recognised as the definitive work on the subject.

RYU RYU KO and KANRYO HIGAONNA: -The Chinese Roots-

It was the Okinawan *Kanryo Higaonna* (1853-1915) who through his intensive studies in Fuzhou (Fujian, China) -in the period 1867-1881- laid the foundation of what later would become known as **Goju-Ryu karate-do**. *Kanryo* set sail for Fuzhou in the autumn of 1867, when he was 15, with the **Ryukyu Kan**, an area comprising a microcosm of Okinawan life, as his final destination. *Kanpu Tanmei*, the manager of his boarding house the **Uchinayaru**, learned about *Kanryo's* eagerness to study the Chinese martial arts and introduced him to the Chinese master *Ryu Ryu Ko*.

There is still no consensus of opinion about *Ryu Ryu Ko's* exact identity nor about the exact martial art style which he taught. However it is widely believed that the family of *Ryu Ryu Ko* had originally been of the aristocratic class, and in those times only the aristocratic classes studied the martial arts. *Ryu Ryu Ko* studied at the southern **Shaolin Temple** in the mountains of Fujian Province. Due to the internal strife that threatened the feudal system and therefore the Chinese aristocracy, the family was forced to conceal their status in order to survive. For this reason *Ryu Ryu Ko* worked as a bricklayer and a builder. In later life he lived by making a variety of everyday goods such as baskets, furniture and other items from cane. This was the profession he was following when *Kanryo Higaonna* became his pupil. In the area *Kanryo Higaonna* disembarked, White Crane teachers were living and probably *Ryu Ryu Ko* was one of them. The **White Crane (Bai He)** genealogy of Fujian goes back to *Fang Jiniang*, the daughter of *Fang Shiyu*, who is said to have learned **Monk Fist (Luohan Quan)** during his stay in the southern **Buddhist Fujian Shaolin Temple** on the mountain Julianshan (Nine Lotus) near Fuzhou in the Puliang-district. *Fang Jiniang*, from Yongchun near Fuzhou, had also studied the defence- and attack-movements of the **White Crane** and became due to this the founder of the first generation **White Crane** masters. The second generation **Yongchun White Crane Boxing** grandmaster was *Zeng Cishu*, who was also a **Black Tiger Boxing** master.

The **White Crane** tradition of the 17th century Fujian became strongly influenced by **Monk Fist** and **Tiger Boxing**, and is probably the foundation on which *Ryu Ryu Ko* taught *Kanryo Higaonna*. The original **Ancestral (Zong He Quan)** or **Trembling (Zhan He Quan) Crane** style was later split into five main separate branches known as: **Singing Crane**, **Sleeping Crane (Su He Quan)**, **Flying Crane (Fei He Quan)**, **Eating Crane (Shi He Quan)** and **Shouting Crane (Ming He Quan)** and probably numerous sub-branches as well.

However such was the devotion of *Kanryo Higaonna* that he eventually became *Ryu Ryu Ko's* **uchi-deshi** i.e. he received the inner teachings thus learning the whole system, as well as the study of weapons, and traditional Chinese medicine. It is not clear exactly which year *Kanryo Higaonna* began teaching the martial arts in Okinawa, but it is known that he did not begin teaching until a few

years after his return from China. *Kanryo* first began teaching martial arts in his home in Nishishin-machi, but later taught also at the **Naha Kuritsu Shogyo Koto Gakko (Naha Commercial High School)** in September 1905. He had many notable students and eventually his most favourite student, *Chojun Miyagi*, succeeded him as the leading master of **Naha-te**.

CHOJUN MIYAGI'S GOJU-RYU KARATE-DO

Chojun Miyagi (1888-1953) is the founder of today's Goju-Ryu karate-do; he was responsible for taking Naha-te and formulating it into a system.

Miyagi was Kanryo Higaonna's most talented and chosen pupil. Miyagi came from a rich family of high esteem, shipowners who imported -amongst others- medicines from China and supplied these to the royal family, the government and business houses. To prepare him for his future task to lead the family, when only eleven years old Chojun was brought to Ryuko Aragaki (1875-1961), who on his terms sent him at the age of fourteen to Kanryo Higaonna. Here Chojun Miyagi, together with Juhatsu Kyoda (1887-1967), was tutored thoroughly in Higaonna's Naha-te.

After the death of Higaonna the well-off Miyagi, who occupied himself full-time with the study of martial arts, planned a trip to Fuzhou, the mecca of South-Chinese fighting arts (Nan Quan), to visit the birthplace of Kanryo Higaonna's Naha-te and to pay his respects to Ryu Ryu Ko's grave. For two months Chojun Miyagi together with Aisho Nakamoto (1881-1945) stayed in Fuzhou to train and they also visited the Julianshan Fujian Shaolin Temple.

Back on Okinawa he became friends with two tea-merchants from Fuzhou Wu Xianhui (Jap. Go Kenki) and Tang Daiji (Jap. To Daiki, both of them where famous martial arts teachers. Wu Xianhui (1886-1940) came to Naha in 1912 to teach White Crane boxing and made friends with amongst others Juhatsu Kiyoda, Chojun Miyagi and Kenwa Mabuni (1889-1952).

Together with Wu Xianhui, Chojun Miyagi left to visit Fuzhou again at the end of the twenties. Apart from Wu Xianhui who emigrated from Fuzhou to Naha in 1912, *Miyagi* had as already stated a good relationship with Tang Daiji (1887-1937) a Tiger Boxing (Hu Quan) master who also emigrated from Fuzhou to Naha. Introduced by Wu Xianshui, Miyagi met in February 1936 in Shanghai the famous Monk Fist (Luohan Quan) master Miao Xing (1881-1939). Miyagi is said to have trained for some time diligently with Miao Xing and other Chinese masters associated with the Jingwu Athletic Association. He also visited the national martial arts championships.

Miyagi dedicated his whole life to the development of what was called 'toudijutsu' (China hand art) or simply 'te' on Okinawa. In 1921 crown-prince *Hirohito* visited Okinawa before travelling to Europe. Due to his visit Shuri-te as well as Naha-te (by *Chojun Miyagi*) was demonstrated.

In 1925 *Miyagi* demonstrated for prince *Chichibu-Nomiya* and shortly after, in 1926, he founded the Okinawa Karate Kenkyu-Kai (Okinawa Karate Research Club) together with *Chomo Hanashiro* (Shuri-te), *Choyu Motobu* (Tomari-te) and *Kenwa Mabuni*. One year later, *Chojun Miyagi* demonstrated to *Jigoro Kano*,

grappling, locking and throwing techniques and the correct use of breathing. *Kano* was very impressed by this toudijutsu and introduced *Miyagi*, accompanied by his friend *Mabuni* in Japan.

At the end of the twenties and the beginning of the thirties, *Miyagi*, together with his -at that time- top student *Jinan Shinzato* (1901-1945), gave seminars and demonstrations at Japanese universities, Budo-tournaments and at the crowning festivities of crown-prince *Hirohito*.

In 1933 *Chojun Miyagi* registered 'toudi' officially as Goju-Ryu at the Japanese regulating Budo-institution, the prestigious Dai Nippon Butokukai, the All Japan Martial Arts Association.

Later on *Miyagi* was distinguished by the Ministry of Physical Education, receiving the highest honour of the Dai Nippon Butokukai and was appointed representative of the Butokukai department for Okinawa.

Thus Goju-Ryu karate-do -the name derived from the Bubishi- was the first and eldest karate-tradition recognised by the Dai Nippon Butokukai; its founder, *Chojun Miyagi*, acquired an outstanding position in karate-do.

May 1934, *Chojun Miyagi* travelled on invitation to Hawaii where he taught and gave demonstrations until February 1935. His teachings for that matter were referred to as kempo karate.

On the 25th of October 1936 the most outstanding Okinawa-masters (*Chomo Hanashiro*, *Chotoku Kyan*, *Choki Motobu*, *Chosin Chibana*, *Juhatsu Kiyoda* and *Chojun Miyagi*) assembled and changed the name toudijutsu into karate-do.

AN'ICHI MIYAGI and MORIO HIGAONNA

International Organisation: I.O.G.K.F

Before World War II *Chojun Miyagi's* top student was *Jinan Shinzato*. *Shinzato* was a police-detective by profession. Besides karate he also trained in judo. *Shinzato* was talented and it was generally known that he was to become *Chojun Miyagi's* successor. Unfortunately he was killed during World War II. Except for *Shinzato*, *Chojun Miyagi* also lost two daughters and his third son during this war.

Before the war *Chojun Miyagi's* teaching method began with hojo undo, uke harai, ude tanren, yakusoku kumite, kakie and then sanchin kata . This was the students' routine for the first three to five years and comprised eighty percent of *Chojun Miyagi's* teaching. After this, one or two **kaishugata** would be taught, the depth and applications varied according to one's level of understanding and technical ability. *Jinan Shinzato* learned sanchin, sesan and tensho; *Seiko Kina* learned sanchin and seiyunchin; *Meitoku Yagi* learned sanchin and suparinpei; *Shunshin Furugen* learned sanchin and kururunfa. However the senior students from before the war, *Seiko Kina*, *Meitoku Yagi*, *Kiei Tomoyose*, *Shunshin Furugen*, *Eiko Miyazato* and *Eiichi Miyazato*, did not train anymore as they were busy trying to make a living in these hard times.

Therefore in 1948 *Chojun Miyagi* accepted new students and revised his teaching system, arranging the kata of Goju-Ryu into a set sequence, something that had not existed previously.

In February of that year four students came to his dojo. These were *An'ichi Miyagi*, *Bise Chishin*, *Gima Seikichi* and *Tokeshi Kako*. After one year of intensive training only *An'ichi Miyagi* stayed. Up to 1951 he was *Chojun Miyagi's* sole student. A close relation between both grew; *Chojun Miyagi* treated *An'ichi* like a son of his own.

Chojun Miyagi who realised that he wasn't getting any younger taught the essence (gokui) of Goju-Ryu to *An'ichi Miyagi*. From February 1948 to October 1953 *Chojun Miyagi* taught *An'ichi* everything he knew to preserve this knowledge as a whole for future generations.

In 1951 *Miyagi* accepted new students. The first of them was *Shuichi Aragaki*, after him gradually more followed. Usually these students were taught by *An'ichi*. In 1952 the number of dojo-members gradually began to grow.

On the 8th of October 1953 master *Chojun Miyagi* died suddenly of a heart-attack.

Training continued in the garden-dojō of *Chojun Miyagi's* house. Mostly *An'ichi* taught and through his tuition three special students arose: *Yasuo Iba*, *Any*

Sauchi and *Saburo Higa*. For the first time since World War II the Goju-Ryu garden-dojos started to flourish and could claim many outstanding students.

About this time, *Morio Higaonna* joined the garden-dojos of the late *Chojun Miyagi*. Before that time *Morio Higaonna* trained in Goju-Ryu and Shorin-Ryu with *Tsunetaka Shimabukuru*, *Kenji Kaneshiro* and *Yoshishige Omine*. At the intercession of *Tsunetaka Shimabukuru*, *Morio Higaonna* was introduced to the garden-dojos in March 1955. At his first visit he met *Yasuo Iba*. He told the young *Morio Higaonna* that he should go to *An'ichi Miyagi* as he was the most competent of the dojos. After training *Morio Higaonna* always visited *Chojun Miyagi's* widow *Makato* (1887-1966). Sometimes they spoke about *Chojun Miyagi*, some of his senior students, and of karate. She stressed that he should learn from *An'ichi Miyagi* as the latter was most close to her husband and learned from him Goju-Ryu in great detail.

August 1957, *Eiichi Miyazato* built a large dojo in the Asato district of Naha, which he named **Jundokan**, after the name of *Jigoro Kano's* first judo-dojos. *Miyazato* who after the war was heavily occupied with judo became a judo champion around 1950 or 1951 and even left for Japan in April 1953, to attend the **Japan Kodokan** seminar. *Miyazato* finally became an accomplished judo master and president of the **Okinawan Judo Federation** as well. Because of his authority and position as a police-officer *Miyazato* became official head of the dojos with *Koshin Iha* as his assistant and responsible for the fees. They rarely taught however, leaving the daily teaching responsibilities to *An'ichi Miyagi*. It was *An'ichi Miyagi* who for example taught *Yasuo Iha* *suparinpei kata*.

In 1959 *An'ichi Miyagi* left Okinawa to work on an American owned oil tanker. At this time work was very difficult to find on Okinawa and *An'ichi* still had the responsibility of supporting his family. One year later, *Morio Higaonna* decided to go to Tokyo, mainland Japan, to attend **Takushoku University**. Attending university he would return to Okinawa just twice a year, each winter for about one month and each summer for about two or three months. On these occasions he continued his training and further development with *An'ichi Miyagi*.

The **Okinawa Karate-do Renmei** had been formed in May of 1956, with *Choshin Chibana*, the founder of Shorin-Ryu, as its first chairman. On December 30, 1960, this seminal organisation held the first all-style dan grading. *Shoshin Nagamine* from Matsubayashi Shorin-Ryu was chairman at that time. The top-instructors of each style were awarded godan; twenty-five karate-ka were graded sandan (among them *Morio Higaonna*); twenty-three were awarded nidan; and forty were awarded shodan.

Morio Higaonna spent twenty years teaching at a dojos in **Yoyogi**, a suburb in Tokyo, during which time he built it up into a place which became famous throughout the world. As a result many people from a variety of martial arts backgrounds would come to train with and learn from *Higaonna*. In Tokyo

Higaonna also introduced his teacher *An'ichi Miyagi*. During these years *An'ichi Miyagi* passed on the secret and highest level techniques of Goju-Ryu to his student *Morio Higaonna*.

In 1979 with the support of the family of *Chojun Miyagi* and *Ken Miyagi* the fourth son of the founder of Goju-Ryu, as well as many of *Chojun Miyagi's* senior students, the **International Okinawan Goju-Ryu Karate-Do Federation** (IOGKF) was formed. This to keep Goju-Ryu's original techniques unchanged and to further its technical development as well as its popularity according to the wish of *Chojun Miyagi*. *An'ichi Miyagi* was appointed honourable chairman; *Morio Higaonna* was appointed world chief-instructor.

In 1981, *Higaonna* moved to Okinawa and opened a dojo in Naha (*Higaonna* dojo) to do more research. Here he was selected by the documentary makers of the BBC -Howard Reid and Michael Croucher- to represent traditional karate-do in the series "**The Way of the Warrior**".

In 1987 he left for the USA to promote Goju-Ryu. Since 1987 he visited Fuzhou on many occasions to expand his knowledge on the Chinese roots of Goju-Ryu. From these visits a close bond between the **IOGKF** and the **China Fuzhou Wushu Association** (CFWA) was established.

The **IOGKF** today has a large following, numbering tens of thousands of students in forty-five countries all over the world. At this moment the **IOGKF Honbu Dojo** is being constructed on Okinawa, the birthplace of karate. It will be the true Goju-Ryu Budokan, with dojo, meeting rooms and upstairs a dormitory.

IOGKF TECHNICAL CURRICULUM

The Fujian district is the geographical root of most karate-styles due to its location in respect of Okinawa. Concerning Goju-Ryu, it is especially **Monk Fist (Luohan Quan)**, **Crane Boxing (He Quan)** and **Tiger Boxing (Hu Quan)** that determined the image of Goju-Ryu as it became gradually formed by *Kanryo Higaonna* and *Chojun Miyagi*.

The starting point is **qinna**, meaning 'grappling' or 'seizing' and forms the heart of the Chinese self-defence methods. This **qinna** is crystallised out in ritual form **kata**, whereby every move refers to applications or **bunkai** in simple (basic) or more complicated and free forms (**oyo bunkai**). Except for the knowledge of self-defence techniques, kata is also the foundation of energetic qualities such as grounding, rooting, generating power, tension and relaxation, centring, etc. In short all those qualities which are necessary for moving in general and self-defence in particular.

It is clear that the origin of Okinawan karate and Chinese martial arts -with kata as paradigm- was next to self-defence also of holistic nature because of the great interest in Chinese medicine and the philosophical and spiritual traditions.

Partner exercises (**gyaku-te** in Goju-Ryu) with **qinna**, are the basis of **kakie** ('**kokie**' in the Fujian dialect), one of the strongholds of Goju-Ryu.

Goju-Ryu is characterised by emphasising close-combat fighting. In basic **kakie** the karate-ka learns the **go**-aspects such as rooting, absorbing power, using **muchimi** and **ki**-expansion. Aspects that are also emphasised in **sanchin** kata. In the technical respect the karate-ka learns to use pushing- and pulling-techniques in this phase in order to out-balance his opponent (**kuzushi waza**) to make the fighting distance suitable to himself. Connected to this, different methods to lock arms (or legs) of the opponent and 'opening up' the vital points of the body follow (**kyushu-jutsu**).

After learning these basics the applications of the kata are integrated in **kakie**.

The fighting techniques trained in **kakie**, like so many **bunkai** kumite, are known as '**gyaku-te**' and are divided in categories like e.g. **kansetsu waza** (manipulation of the joints), **nage waza** (throwing techniques), **shime waza** (strangulation's) and **kyusho waza** (manipulation of the vital points).

Kakie training is integrated in the total curriculum. As soon as a good foundation is laid in terms of basic techniques and abilities, **kakie** training shifts to become more free form ending in **jiyu kakie** kumite and **iri kumi**, the free-fight exercise and competition-form of Goju-Ryu.

Many techniques trained in **kakie** and in the **bunkai** can be traced back to the old Chinese text about fighting arts, the '**Bubishi**'.

Because of the knowledge of **gyaku-te** with **kakie** as practical exercise form and the dynamic qualities of moving, the traditional **kata** of Goju-Ryu form alpha and omega of karate-do. The influence of modern competition karate (WKF) and the longing for international reputation and recognition, has resulted in many karate-styles abandoning their original martial and spiritual orientation. As a consequence of this, **kihon**, **kata** and **kumite** of these 'modern' styles are disintegrated and have developed into the direction of what scores and is allowed in competition.

The loss of knowledge of genuine fighting methods and the spiritual vacuum that occurred during the last decennia in these modern styles, had as result that many karate-ka again orientate(d) themselves towards the profound fighting traditions of Fujian and Okinawa