

Master Gichin Funakoshi

Contributed by Robert Lile
Friday, 29 December 2006
Last Updated Friday, 29 December 2006

Master Gichin Funakoshi Founder of Shotokan Style

...Master Kenwa Mabuni is my childhood friend. He truly stands out through his research in karate and he is an incomparable specialist. Back in the homeland, in Okinawa, he lived in Shuri and I lived in Naha. We had each organized a group to encourage young adepts, while negating everyday preoccupations. Knowing this, a number of people came to us, and we constantly received the visit adepts and students.

My friend Kenwa Mabuni is a calm and sincere person. He did not take the differences amongst school into consideration. He did not hide what he knew, or what he did not know. He did not limit himself with the hierarchy amongst elders and apprentices. If he did not know something, he would not hesitate to ask, modestly, even an apprentice. Once he learned something, he did not keep it to himself, but share it with the group of those who were seeking the answer.

By his open attitude, he has completely surpassed the traditional model of secrecy and the documents, which he has accumulated over the years, now reach a considerable development. It seems to me that no ones know more than he dose. On that level, I believe that one can say that he is truly unique. During demonstration seminars involving the groups from Shuri and Naha, his attitude was to show everything that he knew and to accept eventual critics in order to improve his knowledge. How could someone have criticized him?

With a determination where he embraced life, he moved, a few years ago to Osaka, where he is deploying all of his efforts to teach young students belonging to other groupings, such as at the university of Kansai. He believes that his ultimate purpose is to contribute to the development of his way, in the interest of the art, but also in the interest of country and society. Luckily, his efforts are since getting results and have gained recognition in western Japan. We wish to re-establish contact, to combine the work that we are both completing, one in the West and other in the East, in order to further develop karate.

With such thoughts, I shake his hand in spirit.
In respect towards his work, I add these friendly thoughts to my memories.

Gichin Funakoshi