

Auckland West Goju Ryu Karate Club

Grandmaster An'ichi Miyagi was born on February 9th, 1931, in Naha, the capital city of Okinawa. He began training along with three friends at the garden dojo of Goju-Ryu founder Chojun Miyagi in Tsuboya-cho (a district of Naha) in February 1948. He was 17.

At this time An'ichi Miyagi worked at Kadena air base (one of the many US installations on Okinawa). His parents were dead and therefore he worked hard to support his family in the difficult times which existed after the Second World War. During this same period Chojun Miyagi was teaching three times a week at the Police Academy in Naha. Other than this he was free to concentrate on teaching karate at his home. An'ichi Miyagi took full advantage of this by going to the house of his teacher whenever he had free time. These visits to his teacher's house would not only involve karate training; he also cleaned the house, tended the garden, made tea and performed any other tasks that needed attention.

After one year had passed the three friends who had begun training at the same time as An'ichi Miyagi, for various reasons stopped training. An'ichi Miyagi continued alone. Such was his dedication to both his training and his teacher that Chojun Miyagi came to trust him implicitly. This reflected in his teachings which became more detailed and of a more profound level. Chojun Miyagi spent hours everyday teaching and talking to his protégé, An'ichi Miyagi. They developed a close bond and An'ichi Miyagi became "uchi deshi."

In 1951 new students once more began to enroll at the garden dojo of Chojun Miyagi. After the regular classes had come to an end and all the other students had returned home, Chojun Miyagi would instruct An'ichi Miyagi to remain behind. It was during these times that he would pass on the profound techniques and meanings of Goju-Ryu. His instruction was not solely limited to physical training. He would talk on a vast array of subjects, such as history, culture, society, human relations and so on. Chojun Miyagi would teach the kata (forms) in great detail and explain the "bunkai" (kata applications) thoroughly. He told An'ichi Miyagi, "Even Jiru (Jiru refers to Jin'an Shinzato, Chojun Miyagi's top student who was tragically killed during the Second World War) did not receive such detailed teachings as I have given you...because of this you must continue to train with all your heart." An'ichi Miyagi is the only student of Chojun Miyagi to have been taught by him personally and in detail all the kata of Goju-Ryu.

Before the Second World War, Chojun Miyagi traveled widely and was involved in many projects to spread karate throughout mainland Japan and the rest of the world. However, from 1948 until 1953 he remained in Okinawa. Before the War he had been dedicated to his own training and research, to further develop the art of Goju-Ryu Karate, but his purpose in life had now changed. He was intent on passing on Goju-Ryu, and the "Gokui" (secret principles) of Goju-Ryu to the next generation. To this end Chojun Miyagi taught An'ichi Miyagi all the knowledge that he had amassed during his lifetime in the martial arts. Such was his desire to pass on the correct teachings that he taught An'ichi Miyagi right up until the evening before his death.

Sadly, Master An'ichi Miyagi passed away on April 28, 2009, and like as his teacher before him, he had only one true student to whom he passed on the correct teachings of Goju-Ryu; that student is Master Morio Higaonna.