

Kyan Chotoku



Kyan Chotoku was the founder of Shorinryu karate. He was born in Shuri, Okinawa in 1870, and started training in the martial arts at the young age of 8. Because he was young when he started his training, the discipline of the arts made an impression on him that lasted his whole life; one of discipline, and a sense of order.

At the age of 30, he moved to Katena, where he'd spend the remainder of his life. Kyan Chotoku was a thin man, and with his slim stature he became extremely proficient at kicking technique, to the point where many Okinawans said he had no equal, especially with his double jump kick. However, despite his prowess in kicks, he was a complete martial artist, and did not consider himself a specialist. He believed one must be good at both hand and foot technique, and be well rounded to not be imbalanced.

At that time, each karate teacher only taught a few kata, so Kyan Chotoku sought out many different teachers so that he could become as well-rounded in karate as possible. He practiced Seisan itself for 2 years until he perfected the kata. The attention to detail and repetition required to master a kata had a profound impact on him, and he developed a great respect for the law.

Kyan Chotoku was known for some great physical feats including his unbendable arm. When Kyan had gotten older, he would demonstrate this feat at festivals. People of all ages would try to bend his arm which he held extended in front of him. No one was ever successful at bending his arm. When he was asked what the secret to his incredible strength was, his answer was always the same, "Develop your tanden (center). Drop your mind there and operate from there. Practice your kata until your kata moves from your tanden. When you *become* the kata, you've achieved the secret."

Master Kyan Chotoku's Shorinryu karate emphasizes tenets that match his thin, fast, physical stature. The style emphasizes higher stances, speed and mobility, and a push-pull motion.

Kyan Chotoku passed away on September 20, 1945 due to hunger near the end of World War II.