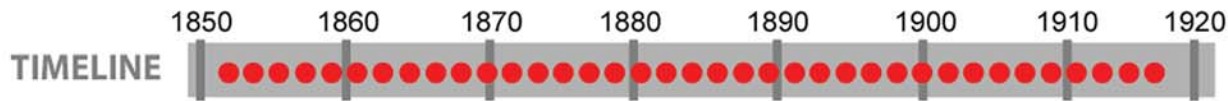




# Profiles of Our Founding Masters

## GŌJŪ-RYŪ KARATE MASTER KANRYO HIGAONNA



**Born:** March 10, 1853 in Naha, Okinawa

**Died:** December 1916 in Okinawa.

Kanryo Higaonna was a native of Nishi-shin-machi, Naha, Okinawa. He was born into a merchant family, whose business was selling firewood, an expensive commodity in the Ryukyu Islands. He founded the fighting style "Naha Te" which would later evolve to be known as "Goju Ryu" Karate.

In the early 1860s he began studying the Okinawan martial art Okinawa-Te. In 1869 Higaonna sailed to Fuzhou in the Fukien province of China. He spent at least several years there, studying with various teachers of the Chinese martial arts. Higaonna was introduced to the kempo master Ru Ru Ko. According to oral account, Higaonna spent years doing household chores for master Ru Ru Ko, until he saved his daughter from drowning during a heavy flood and begged the master to teach him Kung-fu as a reward.

In the 1880s Higaonna returned to Okinawa and continued the family business. He also began to teach the martial arts in and around Naha. His style was distinguished by its integration of both "Go" (hard) and "Ju" (soft) techniques in one system. He became so prominent that the name of the martial art form "Naha-te" became identified with Higaonna's system. Higaonna was noted for his strong kicking legs and for his powerful Sanchin kata. Students reported that he was immovable in the Sanchin stance and the wooden floor would be very warm from the gripping of his feet while performing the kata.

Higaonna's prized student, Chojun Miyagi, later succeeded him to further refine the techniques we know today as "Goju-Ryu".

