

Karate Today —Strolling through Karate History— Article 2

June 20, 2023 → June 20, 1895 | Back to 128 Years Ago

The second article of “Karate Today” will take you back to June 20, 1895, which is 128 years before today (June 20, 2023).

Y Oshimura Chogi visited the former royal family!

On June 20, 1895, Yoshimura Chogi, Karate expert, visited the Sho family in Tokyo and presented a written opposition to the Kodokai movement, which at that time was being conducted mainly by the Sho family and the old ruling class.

The Kodokai movement can be seen as an endeavor to restore the feudal domain and set up a distinct system where the Sho family, the former royal family, would hold hereditary governance over Okinawa Prefecture.

Although the movement ultimately failed, it had collected a remarkable 73,322 written signatures in the prefecture. Considering that the population of Okinawa at that time was about 500,000, it would seem that there was a considerable support. Furthermore, in the petition issued by the Kodokai in 1896 ("Letter of Intent from the Kodokai"), four names appear as representatives of the signatories, among which is the name of Asato Anko, a great master of "Karate."

Nevertheless, why Chogi took a stance against the Kodokai movement, which had the support of such a large number of people? To understand why, it is necessary to know about Chogi's father, Yoshimura Chomei. His father, Chomei, was the leader of the so-called "Stubborn Party," which was opposed to the unification of the Ryukyu Islands into a Japanese Prefecture. Chomei may not have admitted the Kodokai movement, which was based on the premise of "Okinawa being one prefecture within Japan."

On June 12 of the same year, he left Ryukyu with his son Chogi to express the opposite opinion, and arrived in Kobe (Hyogo Prefecture) on the 17th, where he was forced by Kyan Chofu (father of Kyan Chotoku) and Hiyagon An-ei, who had been delegated by the Sho family, to abandon his trip to Tokyo due to the illness of Sho Tai (the former king of Ryukyu). It is unknown how the situation progressed from this point, however, Chogi, who had been accompanying him, eventually decided to visit the Sho family alone. On June 20, Chogi visited the Sho family, but unfortunately, he was unable to see Sho Tai, rather handing a letter to the family retainer, Kushi Joho to fulfill his duty. What an interesting human interaction between martial artists and karate practitioners.

Somokoji

June 20, 2023

Translation and Proofreading by Nakanski