



空手研究室

# THE SHOTOKAN DOJO (1939-1945)

## ARTICLE – NO. 8

The Shōtōkan Dōjō, founded by the Funakoshi family, was a landmark in the history of modern karate. Widely recognized and documented at the time, it stood as a symbol of the martial and spiritual path. Its destruction in the 1945 air raids on Tōkyō marked a tragic cultural loss amid the devastations of war.

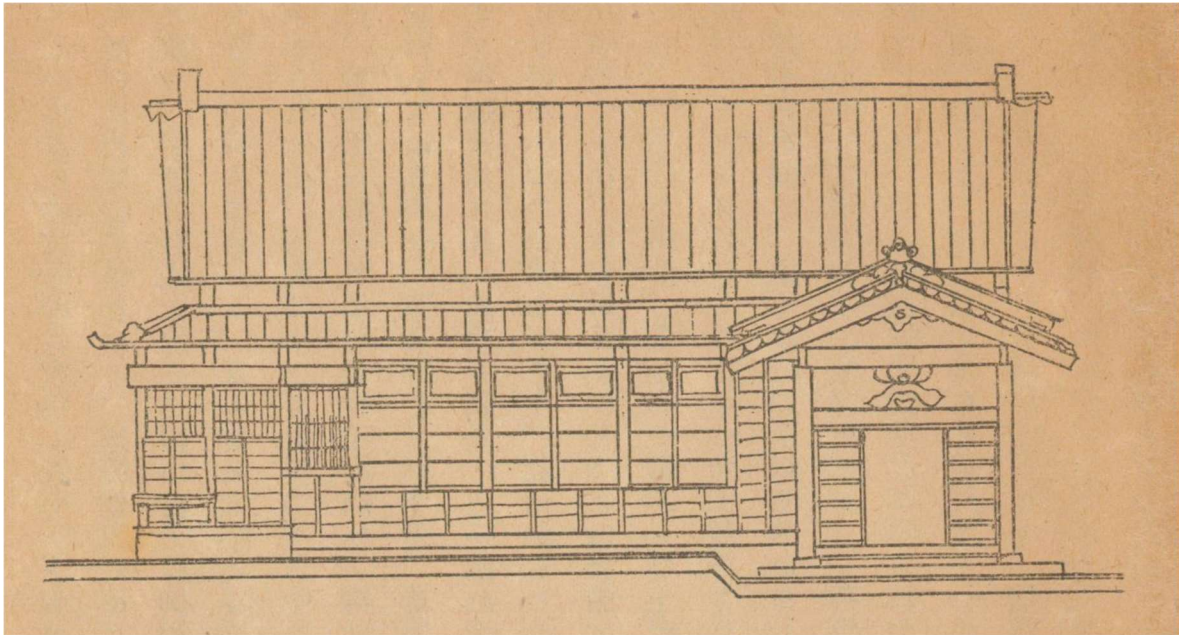
Yannick Schultze  
Drochtersen – May 4, 2025  
[www.karate-kenkyu.com](http://www.karate-kenkyu.com)

# The Shōtōkan Dōjō

by Yannick Schultze

The devastating Pacific War (1941–1945) claimed countless human lives and, as with every war, brought with it immeasurable cultural losses. Numerous important cultural assets were destroyed. One such valuable symbol was the former Shōtōkan Dōjō of the Funakoshi family in Tōkyō.

This dōjō, a milestone in the history of modern karate, was officially inaugurated on January 29, 1939. The opening ceremony received considerable attention, especially in the specialist magazine "Karate-dō", which reported on it in detail. Funakoshi Gichin Sensei himself wrote an article for the occasion entitled "shin dōjō rakkusei ni atatte – On the Completion of the New Dōjō."



Construction drawing of the Shōtōkan



Opening ceremony





From left to right: Uemura Wadō, Hayashi Yoshiaki, and Funakoshi Gigō (Yoshitaka)



2nd from the left, Funakoshi Gigō (Yoshitaka), in the middle, Funakoshi Gichin, and 4th from the left, Funakoshi Giei

On April 29, 1945, this symbol of the spiritual and physical path was completely destroyed during a devastating American air raid on Tōkyō — the Shōtōkan went up in flames and burned to the ground.

All that remains of the Shōtōkan are photographs, memories, and written accounts — silent witnesses to a vanished reality. War leaves behind not only destruction on the battlefield, but also robs us of spirit, culture, and the things that people have created with dedication. In all its facets, it is a tragedy.

**Additional Information**

For those wishing to delve deeper into the history of Shōtōkan Karate, the well-researched works of Henning Wittwer come highly recommended ([www.gibukai.de](http://www.gibukai.de)). And for anyone seeking to learn more about Funakoshi Gichin's time in Okinawa, the in-depth Japanese studies by Nakamura Akira are essential reading.