

Brief History of Karate

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Karate is an ancient martial art that was practiced in the island of Okinawa (today part of Japan). It was developed from several Chinese fighting methods that were brought to Okinawa by fishermen and merchants.

In the early 17th Century the Okinawan rulers forbade its inhabitants from owning weapons, and even restricted the use of farming tools. The Okinawans then began to secretly train in the arts of the empty hand combat.

During the 19th century, prohibitions were lifted, and different schools began to develop. One of them was founded by Master Gichin Funakoshi (1868 -1957). He brought karate to the main island of Japan and adapted it to its modern form in order to bring it to the Japanese public schools and expand its reach. Funakoshi is today considered by most the father of modern Karate.

In 1936 Funakoshi opened the Shotokan dojo in Tokyo, and from that time, the style he taught has been known by that name: Shotokan

Karate-do, a way of Life

Master Funakoshi also added the suffix "do" to Kara-te. All together, Karate-do means "the way of the empty hand". The "do" signifies that the practice of Karate is beyond the study and practice of mere fighting techniques; it is "a way" to self knowledge, and a path to perfecting the character of its practitioners.

Today, Karate may be practiced at different schools all around the world, either as a martial art, a sport, or an aerobic workout. At Colorado Karate Club, the principal object remains the practice of Karate-do. That is, Karate as a way of perfecting the student's character, improve self confidence, and instill discipline.

As a reminder of the greater object of their training, Master and students recite the founding principles of Karate-do (the Dojo-Kun) at the end of each class:

Seek perfection of character,
Be faithful,
Endeavor,
Respect others,
Refrain from violent behavior