

DZR Kempo Karate

Modern Karate had its origin in Okinawa. The Okinawans learned their "boxing" forms from immigrant Chinese Kempo (Ch'uan Fu) masters. It was called variously Ryukyuan Te and more popularly Okinawa Te (Okinawa Hand). Later it was changed to Kara Te (Chinese Hand), but this was offensive to natives of Okinawa, so a homonym was selected so that the pronunciation was the same but the meaning was different: Kara Te (Empty Hand).

The man credited with the establishment and systematization of modern Karate, and considered the founder of Karate, was Gichen Funakoshi (1868 - 1957). He was a contemporary of Jigoro Kano (1860 -1938), Morihei Ueshiba (1883 - 1969), and Seishiro Okazaki (1890 - 1951).

Funakoshi was sickly as a child and was not expected to survive, but he did. He later credited his health and long life to Karate. His style was first called Shotokan in 1936. He indicated that the Chinese forms were too difficult to learn and shortened them. Many Chinese forms used more circular movements while his new forms were more linear. While still wearing his belt tied at the side like the Chinese, Funakoshi changed the Chinese names for his techniques to the Japanese forms. He felt the heart of Karate was kata training, practical self defense, and character development.

One of Funakoshi's students, Chojun Miyagi (1888 - 1953) visited Hawaii in 1934 on a highly acclaimed instructional tour, and help popularize Karate. Miyagi was credited later as being the founder of Goju (hard-soft) style. It is probable that it was in this time frame that Master Okazaki studied Karate.

Master Okazaki claimed to have mastered Okinawa Te. I became aware of this back in 1960 from the translation of his scroll. While Prof. Estes did not teach us the Karate forms, I studied them independently from about 1960 on. Prof. Rory Rebmann, one of Prof. Ray Laws' students said Prof. Law taught some basic Karate forms which he claimed he learned from Master Okazaki. Prof. Law taught these in the 1950's and 1960's. Therefore in the mid 70's Prof. Edwards introduced modified Shotokan forms into his DZR instruction, along with practical applications ("practice fights"). Later when the Okazaki Biographical Research Team led by Prof. Edwards went to Hawaii in 1978, they visited the dojo of Prof. Francisco Limbago. At a demonstration put on for Prof. Edwards, Prof. Limbago's students demonstrated basic Shotokan forms modified for JuJitsu. These were exactly the same as the modified forms that Prof. Edwards was teaching. Thus the Kempo techniques that were part of the Okazaki system have been restored and preserved to the best of our ability.