

Introduction to Shitō-Ryu Karate-Dō

Karate-Dō (pronounced "kah-rah-teh-doe" in Japanese) means "Empty-Hand Way" in English. While usually thought of as a Japanese fighting art, Karate actually originated on Okinawa in the RyuKyu Islands south of Japan. Originally, Karate referred to "Chinese Hand" because the Okinawans borrowed many of their techniques from the Chinese. In this century, the Japanese adopted Karate and changed the kanji so that the pronunciation remained the same but the characters now meant "Empty-Hand".

The name **Shitō-Ryu** (pronounced "she-toe-rue") derives from the first kanji or Japanese characters of two famous Okinawan Karate masters, Itosu and Higashionna. The founder of Shito-Ryu, Kenwa Mabuni, studied with both of these masters. Even though they came from different areas of Okinawa and had very different approaches to Karate, Mabuni thought both perspectives were valid. So when Mabuni moved to Osaka, Japan, he began teaching Karate incorporating both the Itosu (Shuri-Te) and Higashionna (Naha-Te) methods. As a result, Shito-Ryu has over 60 kata or formal exercises (the combination of both systems)! When asked to name his "style " of Karate by the Japanese Ministry of Education, Mabuni called it "SHI" (from the first character of Itosu's name) "TŌ" (from the first character of Higashionna's name), "Ryu" means style or school.

Dudley Moon, the chief instructor for Shitō-Ryu in Albany, has 40 years experience teaching Karate. First introduced to Shitō-Ryu Karate by Mr. Robert Coryer, Moon Sensei (teacher) trained under masters such as Siyogo Kuniba and Teruo Hayashi. Then in the early 1990's, he was accepted as a direct student of Kenzo Mabuni, the son of Kenwa Mabuni and inheritor of Shitō-Ryu karate system. Dr. Moon holds the rank of Hachidan or eighth degree belt and Hanshi (master teacher) in seito Shitō-Ryu Karate-Do. Moon Sensei teaches traditional Karate-Do which emphasizes the use of the various techniques in self-defense, but is ultimately focused on character development and self-knowledge. Classes are run much the same as Shitō-Ryu classes in Japan complete with Japanese terminology. In addition to Karate, Moon Sensei also teaches other forms of Kobudo or traditional Japanese/Okinawan martial arts.