

A Quick Overview of Martial Arts

Martial Arts is a general term referring to any system of self-defense or even a style of fighting. These systems or styles are typically done without weapons, but for some many include hand held weapons powered by the movement of the body.

Primarily there are three major categories of Traditional Martial Arts:

Kung-fu is perhaps the oldest of all the styles of Martial Arts and originates out of the country of China. Much of Kung-fu has its origins in the Shaolin Temples where monks developed 'walking meditations' to assist with health (exercise), developing meditative postures (helping to calm one's mind for increased focus), and offering a method of self-defense (monks were often targets of thieves and bandits as they were considered passive). This is why you see many of the movements of kung-fu as fluid, redirecting an attackers energy away from the defender in an attempt to dissuade the attacker without having to use lethal force.

Karate is associated with the islands of Okinawa as well as mainland Japan. However, much of karate originated out of Okinawa as a defense system against the invasion by the Japanese Samurai warriors. Villagers and farmers were prohibited from owning weapons such as swords, bows and spears, and so they had to revert to open handed defense systems against armed Samurai. Karate adapted the kung-fu styles into their own systems of self-defense. Okinawans developed a half hard-half soft system to both redirect an attackers energy (as many Samurai warriors were trained combatants) while also allowing for a hard attack that would immobilize the attacker.

Taekwondo originates out of the country of Korea and was developed from styles of kung-fu to thwart off the attacks from the Mongolians from the north. The aerial kicks were designed to kick a horseback rider (which was the preferred attack of the Mongolians) of their horse, then once dismounted would be much easier to defeat.

A Brief History of Uechi-Ryu Karate Part 1

The full name of the style is Okinawan Uechi-Ryu Karate Do. This is a long name but each word signifies a particular aspect of origin or meaning.

Okinawan – This is the region (Okinawa) in which the style originated after Kanbun Uechi was recognized by the All Okinawan Karate Federation, and Kanbun became the original grandmaster of the style.

Uechi – This is the last name of Kanbun Uechi, whom the style is named.

Ryu – means 'style' (so Uechi-ryu means 'Uechi's style')

Karate – This is a combination word of kara – meaning 'empty', and te- meaning 'hand'. Combining these together then means 'empty-handed'.

Do – Pronounced 'doe' or 'doh', this word means 'way' signifying that this martial art is not something that is simply learned, but that it becomes 'a way of life' for those who practice it. This is what we mean when we refer to Black Belt Excellence and life enhancing skills of martial arts.

