

Kenpo

Kenpo Karate is a complete fighting system that is particularly popular in the United States.

Kenpo places equal emphasis on the use of hands and feet and uses similar fighting techniques to other Okinawan fighting styles. Kenpo also practises Kata or forms like other martial arts. Whereas most Karate styles use [white Gis](#) (uniforms) throughout, a visual characteristic of Kenpo is its use of black Gi's for higher grades and even the mixing of black Gi tops with white pants and vice versa.

History of Kenpo

Like most Okinawan fighting arts, Kenpo Karate can trace its roots back to the Shaolin monks of China. Master ["To-De" Sakugawa](#) (1733-1815) from Shuri, the ancient capital of Okinawa, travelled to China in the 18th century to train with the Chuan Fa masters (Chuan Fa is what Chinese Kung Fu was called at that time). On his return to [Okinawa](#) he developed what became known as Shuri Te, from which Kenpo was later born. In contrast, the Okinawan martial arts developed in Naha, the modern-day capital of Okinawa, first became known as [Naha-Te](#), and developed later on into [Goju-Ryu Karate](#)).

In 1916 a young Hawaiian named James Mitose travelled to Kyushu in Japan where he learnt Kosho Ryu Kempo. He later returned to Hawaii where he taught William Chow, who further developed the art. To differentiate his system from that of Mitose, William Chow called his school Kenpo Karate. As a visual break from the traditional Japanese and Okinawan Karate styles, Mitose and Chow introduced the wearing of black Gi's for higher ranks, to indicate that Kenpo was a different and more of a "war art" than the increasingly sports-oriented, white-Gi-wearing Karate styles.

Ed Parker, father of American Kenpo

Ed Parker, also a Hawaiian, was a student of William Chow. Ed Parker is considered the father of American Kenpo, as he had the greatest modern day influence on the spread of Kenpo around the world. Ed Parker opened the first ever university campus martial arts school in Utah USA in 1954, at the age of only 23.

Ed Parker later became a tournament promoter. At one of his early tournaments, Bruce Lee first came into the view of the general public. Ed Parker was also active as a movie actor, stunt coordinator, author and instructor to many famous Hollywood actors.

Kempo or Kenpo?

There is no difference between Kenpo and Kempo, they are different spellings of the same martial art. The Japanese kanji character for kenpo and kempo is the same, yet when translated to English, the N can also be an M. Kenpo or Kempo translates to "Law of the fist".

Origin of Kenpo: Okinawa

Founded By: Sakugowa

Popularised by: Edmund K Parker better known simply as Ed Parker or “The Father of American Kenpo”.

Among his most famous students where Elvis Presley, Larry Hartsell, Steve McQueen, Robert Wagner, Warren Beatty, Audie Murphy and Dan Inosanto.

Books by Ed Parker

Infinite Insights into Kenpo Vol 1 Mental Stimulation

Infinite Insights into Kenpo Vol 2 Physical Analyzation