

SHITO-RYU

Kenwa Mabuni (1889 – May 23, 1952) founded our style of *Karate-do*. He began training at the age of 13 with his first instructor, *Yasutsune Itosu (ee-toe-sue)*. *Itosu* taught the *Shuri-te (shoe-ree teh)* style which is predominantly focused on speed and agility. *Chojun Miyagi* introduced *Mabuni* to his teacher, *Kanryo Higaonna (he-ga-oh-nah)*. *Higaonna* taught the *Naha-te (nah-ha teh)* system which is based more on strength, hardening the body and in-fighting. *Mabuni* began training with his friend under *Higaonna*.



Another person *Mabuni* trained with was *Wu Xian Hui*. The Okinawans called him *Go Kenki*. He was a Chinese tea merchant and master of White Crane Kung Fu. He also greatly influenced *Mabuni* and their training lead to the development of several *kata*.

Mabuni originally called his style *Hanko-ryu (hahn-koh roo)* which means “half-hard style.” He moved to Japan in 1922 to begin teaching. *Mabuni* received his *renshi (ren-she – polished instructor or expert)* title from the *Dai Nippon Butoku Kai (die knee-pohn boo-toe-coo kai)* in 1931. The *DNBK* was the national organization created to oversee Japanese martial arts.

Mabuni wanted to pay respect to his teachers, so the name *Shito-ryu (shh-toh roo)* is made up by the first characters from both *Itosu* and *Higaonna’s* last names. *Ryu* means style. *Shito-ryu* was formally registered in 1932.

Shi to ryu 系 東 流
系 州 Itosu
東 恩 納
Higaonna

系 東 流 空 手 道

When *Mabuni* passed away, he left the style, name and documents to his second son, *Kenzo Mabuni* (May 30, 1927 – June 26, 2005). *Soke* (so-keh – grand master) *Mabuni* preserved his father's system, teaching it exactly as his father had written it down in 1929. Upon his death, *Soke Mabuni* left the style to his daughter *Tsukasa* (sue-kah-sah) *Mabuni*.



Kenzo Mabuni



Tsukasa Mabuni

The *Shito-ryu* curriculum syllabus is complete. No other martial art offers such a variety of movements or techniques.