

## LINEAGE

Karate traces its ancestry back to the ancient martial arts of the Tang Dynasty in China (618 – 907AD). This type of martial arts was brought to Okinawa and passed on through the diligence and thoroughness of many past masters. To fully understand and appreciate Chito-ryu karate we must begin with our founder Dr. Tsuyoshi Chitose, or O'Sensei as he was affectionately known by his students. He was born in Naha City on the island of Okinawa on October 18, 1898. He began his Tode (karate) training when he was seven years old under the tutelage of Arakaki Sensei who taught him his first kata- Seisan. O'Sensei also had the opportunity to train with other great karate masters such as Anko Sensei Itosu, Chotoku Kiyama Sensei, Chiyomu Hanagusuku Sensei and Kauryo Higashionna Sensei. In 1922 O'Sensei went off to Tokyo to study medicine, but continued practicing karate in his spare time with Gichen Funakoshi, "the father of modern day karate". In March of 1946 Dr. Chitose, after having practiced medicine for some years, opened *Yoseikan* dojo in Kirikuchi City, Kyushu. Since O'Sensei was a medical practitioner he was concerned about some of the negative effects of the older training methods and therefore based his style of teaching on sound medical, physiological and scientific principles in order to foster health in all, especially the young. In 1948 Dr. Chitose, along with Gichen Funakoshi and other great karate masters helped organize the All Japan Karate-do Federation (Zen Nihon Karate-do Renmei). Around the same time he decided to name his style of karate Chito-ryu. "Chi" meaning "thousand", "to" from the Chinese "tang" and "ryu" meaning "way" hence translating Chito-ryu as "The thousand year old Chinese Tang dynasty way", signifying the ancestry of karate. O'Sensei passed away June 6, 1984.

In 1952 a young man by the name of William J. Dometrich, of the 187<sup>th</sup> Airborne Regimental Combat Team, began his training of Chito-ryu karate in Japan. While stationed in Beppu City, Kyushu he studied under one of O'Sensei's students, Ichiro Shirahama. He soon was granted permission by Shirahama Sensei to meet and train under O'Sensei himself. The young Dometrich did not anticipate being refused to study Chito-ryu by O'Sensei, but that was the case for some time. With much determination and perseverance, O'Sensei accepted the American soldier as his karate student. Having trained with O'Sensei for a few years Dometrich Sensei earned his San Dan (third degree black belt) and returned to the U.S. with his unit. Dometrich Sensei established a small dojo in Northern Kentucky in 1962 with the help of Barbara Dometrich, his wife and the first U.S. female Chito-ryu black belt. O'Sensei made a visit to the US in 1967 and requested that a strong Hombu Dojo (headquarters) for Chito-ryu be established in the United States as well as the development of a good organization. With support and encouragement O'Sensei The United States Chito-ryu Karate Federation (USCKF) was born and Dometrich Sensei was named Chairman and Chief Instructor. The *Yoseikan Hombu* is presently located in Covington, Ky.

## HISTORY OF YOSEIKAN II

In 1962 Lawrence C. Hawkins, Jr. began his training of Chito-ryu under Dometrich Sensei at the *Yoseikan Hombu*. At a time of racial and social unrest, Dometrich Sensei wholly accepted Hawkins, an African-American, as a student just as O'Sensei had accepted a Caucasian-American soldier to train in his dojo during post-WWII era Japan. Hawkins, the current Chief Advisor of the United States Chito-ryu-karate Federation and founder of *Yoseikan II Cincinnati* left to join the U.S. Air Force for three years. Upon Hawkins Sensei's return to the Hombu, Dometrich Sensei said to his student "I don't need anymore tournament champions, I need teachers." Hawkins Sensei was working at Proctor and Gamble during the day, attending law school at night and practicing karate during his spare time. Conflicting schedules with law school, work and karate resulted in Hawkins Sensei requesting permission to start his own karate school in 1971.

The first location of Yoseikan II Cincinnati was in the Mont Michel Apartments in Clifton from 1971-1972. One of the initial students offered their apartment as a training space and when there were too many students to train in the apartment, training moved to the clubhouse of the apartment complex. In 1972 the dojo made a bold, daring move to its first public domain on Woodburn Ave. There was no locker room, but there was a small bathroom (4x6ft.) in which 2 or 3 students could change. The next location was at Peebles Corner (1973-1982) on the second floor at the corner of McMillan and Gilbert, across from a bus stop and TV store. There were two small rooms with a common stairwell between them; one room had a tiny office attached. Students used to change in a mop closet in the stairwell. In the winter, sometimes the pipes would freeze, resulting in no heat, and the floors would become covered with ice. Once, Hawkins Sensei delivered a kiai and cockroaches actually fell off the wall. It was very hot in the summer. One morning, the students arrived to find one of the two doors kicked in. Someone had broken in and stolen some training tools.

The school location moved around a few more times to include a day care, the Alms Hotel and Burnett Woods before being established at the first building Hawkins Sensei owned on Reading Road in North Avondale. From the fall of 1984 to the winter of 2007 this location transformed from an empty warehouse to a dojo with a wooden training deck, a Japanese garden, separate male and female locker rooms, a social center (with a beer tap!), fitness center, and sauna. Of course none of these amenities could compare to Hawkins Sensei's dedication and commitment to his teacher, students and Chito-ryu karate.

As the number of dedicated students joining Hawkins Sensei school grew each year it became apparent that the dojo was not going to accommodate them. In November of 2007 Hawkins Sensei announced the move of Yoseikan II to its present location at Taconic Terrace in Woodlawn. A former television studio was transformed into a state of the art dojo and law office. The *Yoseikan II Chito-Kai Kan*, as named by Dometrich Sensei, represents the years of dedication, hard work and loyalty by Hawkins Sensei. His

achievements as a karate teacher and lawyer have inspired his students and others to embrace and pursue endeavors as would the martial artist and that is to live life with the passion and discipline required to properly learn and understand what one is doing. Thank you, Kyoshi Hawkins, for the opportunity to train in the martial arts under your tutelage.