The Kensankai Quarterly

Okinawa Shorinryu Karatedo Kobudo

Fall 2026

Kaicho Corner Fall 2026:

In Okinawa, October is a special time of year. Naha hosts the annual Otsunahiki (Great tug-of-war). Every five years the prefecture hosts an Uchinanchu Festival where Okinawans from around the world gather in Okinawa to celebrate their cultural heritage.



Also on 25 October is Karate no Hi (Day of Karate). This date commemorates the 1936 "Meeting of the Masters" where leading Okinawa Karate masters held a historic roundtable discussion hosted by the Ryukyu Shinpo newspaper. I characterize this meeting as the beginning of "modern traditional karate." Modern because it updated characterization of the art from one heavily influenced by China (Todi) to the modern term of Karate. From this Karate adopted other characteristics such as a ranking system, a uniform and other modernizing aspects.

But the Otsunahiki is an event that is unlike any other. Two massive 5 foot diameter lengths of rope weighing 40 tons are brought together and joined by a huge wooden peg. The ropes are divided into East and West and they represent Male and Female (or yin and yang) principles of eastern philosophy. The two lengths of rope represent aspects of the Okinawan society. The East represents royalty, nobility, and prayers for an abundant harvest. The West represents the trade, commerce and prayers for profitable business and abundant rain. The event celebrates the Okinawan ideal of *Yuimaaru* or the enduring spirit of cooperation and mutual support.



From the massive main rope there are hundreds of smaller ropes that the tens of thousands of participants can grasp and pull during the tug-of-war event. The event is less of a competition more a symbol of the healthy tension and balance that sought in Okinawa society.

As we train as individuals, we can similarly see healthy tensions. We should find a relaxed tension as we do our kata. We learn to compress and expand while we allow dynamic movement of our bodies. We want to root but not be immobile. As an organization we seek cooperation and mutual support through Karate.

I was so excited to see everyone in Shelby last month. A huge expression of gratitude to Jimmy Newton Sensei and his dojo family for making that tradition such a success each year. Congratulations to Patrick Lang Sensei and his wife as they welcomed their son, Pheonix, to their family while we were in Shelby.

As we look toward the end of the year, I hope you all have a happy and healthy holiday season.

Jason Perry

Kaicho.



Just for kids

Okinawan Folktale:
Sparrow and Fly

Fly Ratted on the Sparrow

There once was a fly, concerned about sparrows, eating farmer's rice crop. Flies get shooed away when they land on someone's food. But he never saw anyone chase the birds away from the rice fields and it angered him.

So, the fly decided to talk to God and, get the sparrows reprimanded. He told God, the birds were eating rice off the stalks, before it was ready to be harvested. Hearing this story, displeased God and, he agreed, the sparrow needed a talking to. The fly returned to earth, satisfied that the sparrow was in big trouble.



An Angry God

God commanded the sparrow to appear before him. In a loud voice that, rattled heaven and earth, God roared at the sparrow. God said, "Sparrow, a fly informed me, you've been stealing the farmers green rice." Shaking in his feathers the sparrow told God, the fly had misrepresented him. "Sparrows only eat the grains that have fallen on the ground," he told God. Sparrows learned from their ancestors to only consume what mankind doesn't eat to survive. Then he told God some of his observations learned from watching flies. He said, "God if you watch closely, the fly is a disgusting creature. One minute, they are in a pile of manure. Next, they land on someone's bowl of rice!" God thought about it and was no longer angry with the bird. He said, "You're a good lad, you are free to go about your business. I want to see that criminal fly, right now!"



An Angrier God

When the fly got called back to heaven, he figured God was going to reward him. His snitching on the sparrow must have pleased God and, he would be thankful for it. Happily, he buzzed along the way to visit God, again. He was about to get a surprise. God roared at him, "You filthy bug. You have been landing on people's food. And you never stop to wash your hands or feet. How disgusting!" The fly whimpered and rubbed his hands in front of God, apologetically. When he was finally dismissed, he flew back to earth with tears in his eyes. The tongue-lashing is why, the fly rubs his hands, seeking God's forgiveness, to this day.

Have you checked out the ChuraTi Academy?

Introduction to Okinawa History and Culture course on the ChuraTi Academy website. As an association we are dedicated to not only the techniques of karate jutsu but the complete understanding of the values, history, and traditions of Okinawa Karate. This course is an introduction to a better understanding of the origins of our art. All are encouraged to enroll and complete the course.



Introduction to Okinawa History and Culture

This course provides Karateka an introduction to the geographical, geo-political, social, and economic influences…

https://churatiacademy.thinkific.com

Upcoming Events

今後のイベント 空手の日

Shurijo Castle Revival Festival

Nov. 1 – 3, 2026

Immerse yourself in the culture and pageantry of the Ryukyu Dynasty at one of Naha's greatest festivals



The Shurijo Castle Revival Festival, which typically takes place in early November, evokes the spirit of the ancient Ryukyu Kingdom. See gorgeous costumes designed on the attire worn by Ryukyu nobles at the Ryukyu Dynasty Emaki Gyoretsu Parade on Kokusai Street or at the Koshiki Gyoretsu Parade in Shuri. Visitors can also enjoy Ryukyu music and dance performances at Shurijo Castle Park.

Karate Day Commemorative Performance Festival

Nov. 8, 2026

Celebrate karate, the martial art with roots that can be traced back 700 years



Perhaps the most famous of all martial arts, karate embodies shurei-no-kokoro—the spirit of courtesy—a guiding tenet of both karate and life as a whole on Okinawa. Join thousands of others on Kokusai Street in Naha on November 8, as karate practitioners demonstrate their finely disciplined skills. In 2016, Naha's Karate Day celebrations featured in the Guinness World Records for the most people (3973) performing a kata.

Ryukyu Lantern Festival

Dec. 1, 2026 – March 31, 2027

Harken back to the days of the Ryukyu Kingdom as you explore a recreated historical town lit by lantern light

Wooden buildings in the classical style of the Ryukyu Kingdom shine under the soft glow of over 3000 colorful lanterns at this winter festival. Discover handmade lanterns crafted to resemble animals and various objects at a lantern contest, craft a washi-paper lantern of your own, watch concerts and dance performances on a lantern-lit stage, and see buildings illuminated with laser projection mapping. Enjoy jumbo yakitori chicken skewers and steamed meat buns at the Lantern Cafe..



3rd Annual Okinawa Karate Spring Camp

June 4 – 5, 2027



For more information see
https:/www.aoyamadojo.com/



General Kensankai Information

We are still working on transferring all active members from the last membership platform (MemberPlanet) to the new one which will be integrated though the Shorinryu Kensankai web sight. When this task is completed you will get an email with instructions on how to enter the membership platform and update your information and dues. Thank you for your patience.

Stay tuned, more to come in the future.

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The Dojo Corner

Aoyama Dojo

Greetings from Aoyama Dojo!

Hello to all our Kensankai family! We had a wonderful time at Sensei Jimmy Newton's Pioneer Gasshuku this past September. It's always great to come together, share knowledge, train, and catch up with our karate family! We're already looking forward to seeing everyone again at the **Okinawan Karate Spring Camp, June 4–5, 2027**! Be sure to save the dates—we hope to see you there!

Celebrating Our Promotions!

It's been a busy and exciting few months at Aoyama Dojo! We're proud to congratulate **Sensei Phil Safriet on earning his Yondan and Ben Belue on earning his Sandan**. We've also celebrated several mudansha promotions over the past few months. Congratulations to everyone on their hard work, dedication, and accomplishments!







From all of us at Aoyama Dojo, we wish our entire Karate and Kensankai family a **happy, healthy, and safe holiday season**! We look forward to more training, fellowship, and great memories together in 2027!

The Belues & Aoyama Dojo

Newtown's Karate

I hope this newsletter finds everyone in good health and training hard. I'd like to thank everyone that attended our 6th Annual Pioneer Gasshuku in September. We had participants from NC, SC, GA, VA, CO, FL, CA, PA, NJ, TN, and IL to all come together, train and grow in our art. It is becoming not only a great training experience but a reunion of sorts and appreciate the camaraderie that was shared by all.



Topics of study in classes lately have been analyzing fundamentals. I've really had myself and our students look at how to you get from point A to Point B. Instead of just ending up where you think you are supposed to be- how did you get there? I think that is parallel with life. Too many times, we through the motions instead of really looking at where are, where we want to be and how to arrive there. I'd encourage everyone to write down goals if you've never done so. Then outline a plan to achieve those goals. I believe you'll accomplish much more that way instead of just going about your day-to-day.

We just wrapped up a small seminar at Kyoshi Alex Ormaza's dojo. It's always a humbling experience at trading events to see how much more there is to learn.

I met a man named Joe Martin that spoke very fondly of Sensei Perry as he saw our patch, and it was nice to swap stories. It also reminded me of a conversation I spoke of often with Jerry Taylor. He said the thing he was most grateful for among all his training was the relationships he made along the way.

Thank you for the friendships, guidance and mentorship I have received from everyone. It's very appreciated and hope to see everyone again soon.

With gratitude,

Jimmy Newton

Small Forest Karate

Small Forest Karate had several current and past students traveling to Shelby North Carolina for the 2026 Pioneer Gashuku, sponsored by Jimmy Newton Karate.



Everyone had a great time. It was nice to be able to see everyone and study some great martial arts.

We want to thank Renshi Jimmy Newton and his Dojo family for putting on the seminar and all of the instructors who gave their knowledge and friendship.

As you can see, all of the kids had a great time!



Congratulations to all the students who had promotions during the past quarter.





Each journey begins with a step. Enjoy each step of your karate journey.

With thanks,

Thomas Harris

RVA Karate

We had a great time seeing and training with Sensei Jason on the 14th of October when he had a chance to stop by our dojo.



That weekend I was lucky to run into Sensei Troy Landers of Small Forest Dojo in Blacksburg at the Virginia Tech homecoming game. Go Hokies!

There was a joint training session between RVA Karate and Small Forest Dojo on the 24th geared mainly towards brown belts.



It was a great opportunity to learn and talk about what is required for someone to become a black belt and what is expected of you inside and outside the dojo. My two ikkyu greatly enjoyed it and look forward to coming again to continue associating with other Kensankai dojos.of you inside and outside the dojo..

-Sensei Aaron Payne

Traveling?
You can still train while you travel:

Kensankai Dojos:

- **Aoyama Dojo**; Ben & Jamie Belue.
  14 Reeds Way, Flat Rock, NC.
  (828) 6067855
  https://www.aoyamadojo.com/

- **The Renbukan Dojo**: Kevin Roberts;
  182A Bradley Branch Road, Arden, NC
  28704 **http://www.therenbukan.com**

- **Small Forest Karate**: Tom Harris.
  796 Poquoson Ave, Poquoson, VA 23662.
  (757) 868-8798
  http://www.smallforestkarate.com/

- **Newton's Karate**: Jimmy Newton.
  1620 S Dekalb St., Shelby, NC 28152.
  (704) 408-0828 **https://newtons-karate.com/**

- **Shorin-Ryu Karate and Kobudo Kensankai Dojo**; Joe Lanier:
  1901 Hwy 414, Travelers Rest, SC

- **Okinawan Shorin-Ryu Kensankai Karate & Kobudo Dojo**; Patrick Lang D:
  2314 Asheville Hwy, Unit C,
  Hendersonville, NC 28791.
  (828) 697-6878
  http://www.hendersonvilleshorinryukarate.com/

- **RVA Karate** - Aaron Payne: 10800 Center View Dr., Richmond, VA 23235.
  (804) 348-8034
  https://rvakarate.com
- **Taylor's Karate Academy**: Dave Johnson;
  4308 Glade Rd, Mount. Airy, GA 30563
  (706) 716-0225

Traveling Continued:

If you are traveling somewhere else in the country and want to train or are traveling overseas and need an introduction to a dojo in the area, please contact Jason Perry at **Jason.perry@shorinryukensankai.org**.

Resources

List of Dojos in Okinawa:
https://okic.okinawa/en/

YouTube Video:
Getting to Know Japan: The History of Karate in Okinawa-Colonel Jason Perry



My Memories of Sensei Perry

Sometimes a picture is worth a thousand words. This picture was sent as a memory. I can just imagine the cherished memory it is to a few others.





