



# KAZOKU

## Kaikan

By Jerry Figgiani

I have been asked numerous times “Does one have to travel to Okinawa to make their Karate better?” The answer is absolutely not. I’ve witnessed many people who are excellent at Karate that never stepped foot on the island of Okinawa. What I have experience in my travels there, not only for myself, but my students is an excitement that recharges the spirit to train at a higher level. It is a link not only to the mother land of Karate, but a real connecting of the dots to infamous Okinawan Masters and their systems that are truly fascinating. It is an opportunity to experience an emotional connection towards the Okinawans rich history and culture.

teach alongside Takeshi Tamaki Sensei and Masahiko Tokashiki Sensei at the newly built Karate Kaikan. It was also a unique experience for the students traveling with me from the USA and Europe. This facility, which opened in March 2017, is definitely the symbol of the birth place of karate, Okinawa.

Miguel Da Luz, who is in charge of public relations for the Okinawan Karate Information Center said “This beautifully designed facility allows for training and research with large and medium training areas for anyone, regardless of style. The Kaikan also has a museum titled ‘Archives,’ which gives the visitor a fascinating look into the history of Okinawan Karate and Kobudo.”

Located within the Kaikan is another feature, the Okinawan Karate Information Center. Mr. Da Luz said “The center is an Okinawan Prefecture Government funded project designed to promote Okinawan Martial Arts.” Its job is to offer support to worldwide Karate enthusiasts so they could realize their dream of training in Okinawa. In future visits to Okinawa, I will definitely make the Kaikan one of my stops to train. This stunning facility with conference rooms, locker rooms, gift shops and a cafeteria is something I highly recommend to anybody traveling to Okinawa to visit. Though the feeling is different than training in an older traditional dojo in Okinawa, the feeling one gets at the Kaikan is one that Okinawan Karate will continue to make an impact on the world.

The Okinawan Karate Kaikan website states “The Kaikan will serve to preserve, inherit and develop traditional Okinawan Karate as a unique cultural heritage, to educate people both in and outside of Japan that Okinawa is the birth place of Karate. This facility can be used to learn the essence of Karate.” For information regarding the Kaikan and the Okinawan Karate Information Center you can contact Miguel Da Luz at [www.Okic.Okinawa](http://www.Okic.Okinawa)! 🐘

Watching the Okinawans perform their Karate and their approach to living it twenty four-seven, leaves you with a super charged feeling to go back home and make your Karate better. On my recent trip in September 2017, the feeling was the same for me as when I first stepped foot on the island back in 1991. This time I had the honor and opportunity to



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