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**“The Seminar Attendees Train Dedicatedly,
Okinawa Traditional Karate Masters in Virginia”
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The Okinawa Masters Seminar in Washington, DC - 2017 project under the Traditional Okinawa Karate-do Exchange Program sponsored by the Okinawa Prefectural Government and the Okinawa Traditional Karate-dō Shinkō-kai. The seminar was held on November 18th and 19th at Nova Field House in Chantilly, Virginia.



Okinawa Traditional Karate Seminar in Virginia, America

Along with one of the classical Ryukyuan songs, “Mae no Hama “, 150 seminar participants in all white gis marched in front of the Karate Masters from Okinawa and other guests. Just like in the Olympics, some of them were holding placards indicating what States they were from.

After the oath by the representative of the participants, Master Naonobu Ahagon ; 10th-dan in ShōRinRyū Karate and Kobudō, also Vice-President of the Division of the Promotion for Okinawa Traitional Karate-Dō, began his speech. He emphasized the fact that Okinawa is the Birthplace of Karate and that Okinawan Karate has been internationally shared to create and maintain foreign relations.

Master Ahagon made an announcement that the 1st Okinawa Karate International Tournament will be held in August of 2018. He also spoke about the Karate Museum that is now opened since March of this year. He added that the museum is equipped

with various materials and data concerning Karate. Many seminar participants were surprised by the new establishment of a “Karate Promotion Division” at the Okinawan Prefectural Government (OPG).

The five masters sent by the OPG were: Hanshi Naonobu Ahagon (his profile was stated previously); Hanshi Meitatsu Yagi, 10th-dan (Gōjū-Ryū); Hanshi Minoru Nakazato 10th-dan (Shōrin-Ryū); Hanshi Masanari Kikukawa 9th-dan (Gōjū-Ryū) and Kyōshi Harukichi Shimabukuro 8th-dan (Uechi-Ryū). Each one of them performed a Kata at the cultural exchange presentations in the first evening after the seminar. When the last seminar was over the masters still kept themselves busy, but kept smiling while they were taking pictures with the attendees and signing autographs.

The seminar was divided into four classes. A-group for children, B-group for attendees with under 2 years of karate experience, C-group is for those with 3 to 10 years of experience and D-group for those with over 10 years of experience. It was obvious that there were over 100 black belts at the seminar. The method of grouping seemed to be efficient according to most of the participants.

The performances for the cultural exchange presentations were provided by the Sanshin club of the Wahington Okinawa-kai, North Carolina Okinawa-kai and New York Okinawa-kai. Also, the evening’s performances was enhanced by the Kata, Kobudō and Bunkai demonstrations by many dōjōs.

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(Translation: By Teiko)