



# Japan Now March 2026

Japan Now is the email newsletter of the consular office of Japan in Anchorage

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## Karate: A Traditional Japanese Martial Art



In January 2026, Mr. Kenji Mori, who won a gold medal in Men's Individual Karate Kata and a bronze medal in Men's Karate Kumite(-60kg) at the Tokyo 2025 Deaflympics, visited our office. (We shared a post about his visit on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram!](#))

Inspired by this wonderful opportunity, this month, we would like to introduce Karate, which is loved by people all over the world☺☺

## ☐Origins of Karate

Karate originated in the Ryukyu Kingdom, now Okinawa, Japan. It is believed that around the 18th century, techniques from Chinese martial arts were introduced to Ryukyu and combined with local fighting traditions, eventually developing into what we know today as karate.

In the early 20th century, karate was introduced into school education in Japan, helping it spread throughout the country. After World War II, it expanded internationally and gained global recognition.

## □ The Two Disciplines of Karate

Karate competitions generally consist of two elements: Kata and Kumite.

**Kata** is a performance event in which competitors demonstrate a sequence of techniques while imagining attacks from multiple opponents. Athletes are judged on the precision, speed, power, and overall execution of their movements. Kata competitions include individual kata, performed by one athlete, and team kata, performed by three athletes.

**Kumite**, on the other hand, is a sparring event in which two competitors face each other using techniques such as punches, kicks, blocks, and throws. Points are awarded when techniques are delivered accurately, and more difficult techniques, such as kicks, earn higher scores. In many karate styles, techniques are controlled and stop just short of full contact, and excessive force may result in penalties. Some styles, however, practice full-contact karate, in which protective gear is worn and stronger contact is allowed.

## □ The Spirit of Karate

Karate also emphasizes personal growth. In traditional martial arts, practitioners seek to cultivate discipline, respect, and character in addition to physical skills. This spirit is often expressed in the phrase “Rei ni hajimari, rei ni owaru,” meaning “Begin with respect and end with respect.” Participants bow at the beginning and end of practice or competition, reflecting the importance of courtesy and mindfulness. In addition to karate, Japanese budō includes martial arts such as Judo, Kendo, Kyudo, Sumo, Aikido, Shorinji Kempo, Naginata, and Jukendo.



## □ Karate Around the World

Today, karate continues to grow in popularity around the world. It is estimated that there are more than two million karate practitioners in Japan and over 130 million worldwide.

One reason for this global appeal lies in karate's philosophy. Karate is not only about physical strength or competition, but also about developing mental discipline, respect for others, and self-improvement. This balance of physical technique and character development has helped karate gain lasting support and admiration across cultures.



## **2026 National Day Reception**



On February 20, a National Day reception hosted by Head Consul Hamada was held in Anchorage to celebrate the 66th birthday of His Majesty the Emperor Naruhito. Approximately 150 invited guests attended the event, which was marked by a warm and friendly atmosphere throughout, reflecting shared expectations for the continued development of Japan-U.S. and Japan-Alaska relations.

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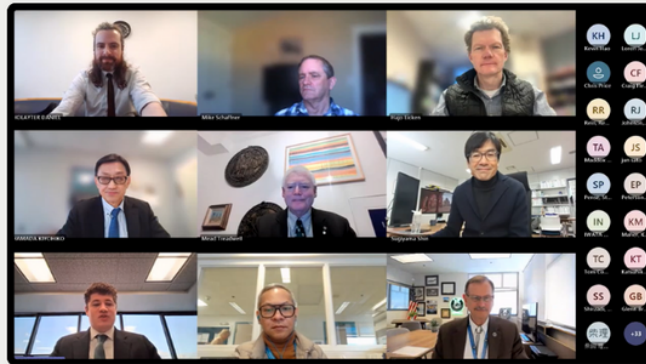
## 2026 Online Arctic Symposium



Gov. Dunleavy



Representative Nick Begich



State Representative Robyn Frier

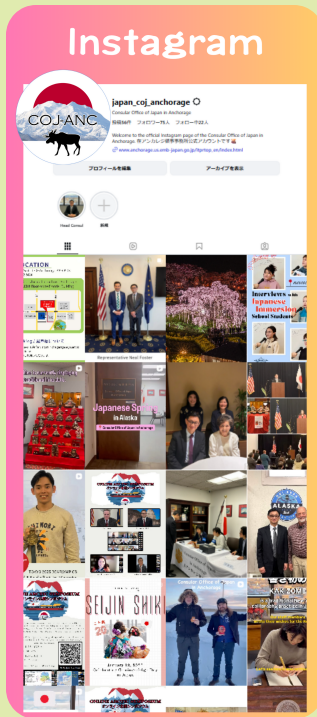


Ambassador Katsuhiko Takahashi

On January 14 and 15, 2026 the Consular Office of Japan in Anchorage hosted the

In case you missed the Online Arctic Symposium please visit our Consular Office home page where materials from the event can be found. We again thank this years speakers and look forward to addressing conditions in the Arctic once more at the next OAS in 2027.

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