**A Shared Birthplace**

Karate, one of the world’s most popular martial arts, originated in Okinawa. *Karate* means “empty hand” in Japanese, and the fighting technique employs only the bare hands and feet. (A related martial art that does use weapons, known as *kobudo*, developed alongside karate.) The Ryukyu Kingdom’s capital of Shuri was one of the places closely associated with karate’s origins. It was also home to the three Shuri Sanka districts the Ryukyu kings permitted to produce awamori. These two famous Okinawa cultural exports, then, may well have developed together. And since few things in the Ryukyu Kingdom were as valuable as awamori, it is not inconceivable that karate was used to defend the precious spirit from thieves.