



Hartlepool Wadokai

10th Shiramizu Annual Championships REPORT

Sunday 22nd February was the 10th anniversary of Shiramizu's annual club-only competition. The official name of the event is:

第 10 回記念白水修養会練成大会

'Dai ju-kai Shiramizu Shuyo Kai Karate-do Rensei Taikai'

(# 10 event Shiramizu Cultivation Association Karate-do Training Tournament). Shiramizu Shuyo Kai is the full name for the dojo.

As per usual with Shiramizu events, Amy and I helped set up the competition on the Saturday before at the Asukaru Sports Centre in Satte City. This was also the first time that we could walk through our parts in the 'Karate-man' demo.

We had an early start, especially since I had to put aside my trademark jeans and T-shirt and wear a suit. Today I would be an official! Arakawa Sensei kindly gave us a ride to the venue, and we were introduced to his father (a Buddhist monk) and older brother (also a Buddhist monk) en-route.

The doors were to be opened at 8:30am so that gave everyone a little time for those last minute things, including the raising of the flag...



LEFT - Mikya (Kikuchi Sensei son) had to do a spiderman impression to achieve the all-important standard raising.

This effort was well appreciated by the dedicated few...

RIGHT - Suzuki Sensei and his oldest son, Kaiji giving the salute!



As usual, the older kids put the younger through the warm up.



Part of the group warm up...



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Opening Ceremony

The Shiramizu banner led the way into the hall for the rest of the competitors, who then made the line up.



Let the competition begin...

All of the categories started with kata eliminations, and most changed to kumite for the semi-final and final rounds. This is a very efficient way of running the competition, meaning that the organisers can get through 400+ competitors in a few short hours. This also means that successful competitors have to be proficient in kata *and* kumite rather than trying to specialise in one or the other.



Two kids from the Sugito Shirayuri kindergarten in action



Kobaton

The competition had a celebrity present, none other than 'Kobaton' the mascot of the Saitama prefecture.

Karate Man Demo

The competition part of the day finished at lunch time, then the demonstrations started. The first one was the 'Karate-man' demo, which Team Gaijin had been hoodwinked into helping with. The story has as many twists as a good 'bond' movie but it's roughly like this:

Misaki (the damsel) is performing a kata demonstration, but then, 'Karate Man' (Okano-san) decides to pick a fight with her...



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They trade a few punches...



Then some super heroes turn up to save her...



...they fight and 'Karate Man' is losing, BUT THEN!



*'Karate man' calls in some reinforcements
- 'The General' flanked by Team Gaijin!!*



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*Team gaijin had lines (in English & Japanese),
My name is Lawrence... I come from Canada...
My name is Carl... I come from England...
My name is Amy... I come from the Moon... (no really!)*



We all fight, and us 'bad guys' are winning.

BUT THEN...!



Green and Pink superhero turn up, we fight some more and this time the fight is more balanced. I fight the green hero and even use the famous 'kamehameha' move!

Pink then stops everyone fighting and says something in English... Team Gaijin announce (in Japanese) that we've been duped by 'The General', and decide to switch sides. We all then thoroughly beat up the 'Karate-man' & 'The General'.

We hug, the end...

...well, almost... the superhero's passed the 'free time' doing various acrobatics and Amy did some fancy flag waving... and Lawrence and I... did our own rendition of Night Fever / Pulp Fiction-type dancing!.



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I think the demo was probably too long, with some of the referee's wanting it to end BUT the kids loved every minute of it. They were more than happy to show their appreciation by beating up the 'superhero's after the demonstration.

Next came various other demonstrations including one from the dance group that rents out the Shiramizu dojo space...



....dancing...



board & tile breaking...

All the competitors performed all the Pinan Kata en mass in age and belt color groups, (youngest kids did Pinan Nidan, slightly older kids did Pinan Shodan, etc) and the adult dan grades performed Seishan kata en mass.

Next came a great kindergarten demo to the beat of a Japanese drum and a number of other demos.



*Beautiful and deadly!
High school students Chihiro, Yuki and Erika' team kata demo...*



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*Utsunomiya Bunsei Girls High School
Kata demo...*



Sensei Fujimoto and his brother Sensei Fujimoto... knife demo

Tsubasa, Yuki and Rie performed individual kata demo's followed by a sword demo.



Then came a 7 vs 7 kumite exhibition, Team Tiger vs Team Dragon. Amy was in the Tiger team, and I the Dragon team. Everyone fought great, but I'm pleased to say that my Dragon Team won comfortably with 4 wins & 1 draw (my fight was the draw!) vs Team Tigers 2 wins & 1 draw



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Dragon Team (right), Tiger Team (left)

The five high school kids then did their demo (two girls beat up three guys) – you can watch this clip on Youtube, followed by great demo's from all the Shiramizu instructors...



Arakawa Sensei, showing the 'Zero' inch punch, to break two boards.



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...and Arakawa Sensei himself!



Uehara Sensei

After that, all that was remaining was the awards ceremony and closing speeches from various important people including Arakawa Sensei's father.

Arakawa Sensei also announced that Uehara Sensei was to be officially given the title of 'Vice Chief Instructor' for the Shiramizu dojo, a great honour!

After the clean up, all that was remaining was a party... with plenty of great food and drink...

...and everyone had a great time!

