

## Newsletter from Prefectural Headquarters of Gifu District

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## Gichin Funakoshi Laureled in Honor & World Shoto Karate Budo Festival Held in Okinawa-ken



**Color** of the sky in Okinawa reverses the concept of "blue".  
Sea of Okinawa reverses the concept of "beauty".

**Okinawa** inherits its own culture and is well-known for resort spot. We would like to feature the island as the birthplace of Karate in the issue of this month.

**Once** the Clan of Okinawa underwent a unique policy and prohibited the residents from possessing weapons. Many were concerned and determined to use their own bodies as weapon which they called karate. The island is surrounded by the sea in 360 degrees for its geographic location. As its historical background is looked up, it is very moving to recognize the karate was founded

in this tiny island, transferred to Japan mainland and to five continents in the world today. As we drive in a car around the island, we can see an outstanding number of dojos built on the seaside strips and on the main streets. Taking a look at neat dojos in the vicinity, we can understand the karate has been inherited in secret and why it is called "a marshal art handed over from father to son". People once used the living room of their own house, an open air, or half the yard of master's residence for the place of practice and exercise.

**On this historic** land of Okinawa the World Shoto Karate Budo Festival was held in commemoration of 50th anniversary of the demise of Gichin Funakoshi, the founder of Shotokan School. We would like to report on this event in this month's issue.

### Summary of World Shoto Karate Budo Festival:

**Mr.** Gichin Funakoshi (1868-1957) was born in Shuri of Okinawa-ken, learned "Karate" (Kara means ancient China, and Te means hand in Japanese) from Mr. Ankou Asato and Mr. Ankou Itosu. He then introduced it to the mainland of Japan for the first time. He reorganized and systematized it, and renamed it as "Karatedo"



(empty hand road). As the founder of Shotokan Karatedo he developed "Karate" or a kung fu of native Okinawa to internationally known "Karatedo". He simultaneously let the people of mainland Japan be aware of the existence of Okinawa which was poorly known to them at that time. This deed put together the hearts of both islands and played a significant role to build a stronger relationship between them.

**These** contributions are shining even after 50 years of his demise such as in making the Karatedo known as "KARATE" in the rest of the world and adopted as an official game in more than 100 countries as in Asian Games or other prominent world games. This means the bondage is not only on Okinawa and Japan but on the global basis with many countries involved. A most regrettable fact remained however that there was not a monument constructed in the island of Okinawa, his birthplace, to remember his deeds in spite he was such a great international master of karate.

**We**, who blessedly happened to have a chance of being associated with Mr. Funakoshi, remember the 50th year of his decease, meet at his birthplace, build the monument to honor his deeds, recognize the starting point of the internationalized karate, and deepen the mutual exchange between the mainland Japan and Okinawa plus the historical and cultural understanding among the world nations. Taking these as ultimate goals we swear to open the World Shoto Karate Budo Festival. (Taken from the references of Laureling Funakoshi Gichin in Okinawa)



Monument of Laureling Shuri-born Mr. Gichin Funakoshi, founder of Shotokan Karatedo. Erected at the approach to Gokoku Shrine on Mt. Ouno, City of Naha.



Many attended the unveiling ceremony of the monument on April 20. Chairman Hayashi and Director Tanaka are seen in the photograph.



**World** Shoto Budo Karate Festival was held at Okinawa Prefectural Budo Gymnasium, a few minutes walk from the monument, the next day following the unveiling ceremony. The site was filled with the international karate players who looked different from us in appearance and in culture. Japan has certainly been an admiration of the world players as the birthplace of karate, but the progress in their skills and techniques has been remarkable and there is a need to recognize the karate is not Japan's own art any more.

**Entrance** of international players from South Africa, Lebanon, Macao, Taiwan, Hong-kong, Greece, India, Britain, Russia, Italy, Canada, New Zealand, Mexico, United States, Switzerland, Germany, Ukraine, and more. Boys, girls, adults, wheelchair handicapped, more than 500 gathered and performed in Okinawa.



**Opening** ceremony with neatly aligned placards. Only half the view is seen in the photo. Spirit of budo is the same on all the players regardless of nationalities. Voice of "Ossu!" and karate heart are exchanged among the players



**National** teams representing individual countries and their fights draw our endless attention. No boundaries exist on hot cheers.



**Authorization** by the Olympics Committee as an official event is likely, convincing Karate is no more the property of Japan only.

**Many** players from Gifu Prefecture attended the game and did fine jobs. The scores are as follows.

## Winning Players at World Shoto Budo Karate Festival (1st to 3rd places • Gifu Players only)

9-10 years old	boy	kata	1st place	Sou Chikamatsu
	boy	kata	3rd place	Ryota Goto

13-14 years old	girl	kata	1st place	Azusa Yamada
	girl	kata	2nd place	Nae Nishigaki
	girl	kata	3rd place	Erika Yamada
Adult	woman	kata	3rd place	Naoko Onishi
9-10 years old	girl	kumite	3rd place	Ai Hasada
	girl	kumite	3rd place	Azusa Yamada
13-14 years old	girl	kumite	2nd place	Nae Nishigaki



Article appearing on Gifu Shimbun April 26 Issue

**106** players participated in the match of male adult. 11 were Japanese who challenged against the sturdy players from overseas for the sake of Japan's dignity. Winner of the game was Kenji Nagaki, an instructor of the headquarters and the victory holder of 70 kilo class of world male kumite championship. He celebrated the victory with the complete recovery from his past injuries. Takuya Makita, another instructor of the headquarters, won

the match of male adult kata. We can expect them to pull ahead of more games in the future.

**The mind** of Karatedo that Master Gichin Funakoshi left us has been succeeded all the time and is handed over somewhere in the world even at the present time. We would like to send our sincere thanks to Mr. Meicho Tatetsu, chief director of Okinawa Headquarters of Shoto Federation and chairman of Okinawa Gichin Funakoshi's Praise Club.



Kenji Nagaki