

Ashihara Karate Romania 2019

The New International Karate Organization (NIKO) director, Kancho Hidenori Ashihara, visited Romania between July 9 and 14, to meet with government officials and also conduct a seminar.

Kancho Ashihara started his trip meeting with Romanian government officials. He congratulated Romania for the successful bid in organizing the **2020 Ashihara Karate World Championship** and asked the Romanian government to support this event.

Romanian Ministry of Youth and Sport, Mr. Bogdan Matei and the General Director, Mr. Daniel Jianu offered their full support for this international competition, and also for the future development of Ashihara Karate in Romania.

NIKO official delegation was represented at this meeting by the following: Kancho Hidenori Ashihara (NIKO Director), Shihan Dai Koichiro Saiki (NIKO Office Manager), Shihan Dai Nicu Dascalu (NIKO Organizing Committee Manager, Romania Area Manager and Ashihara Karate Department Director), Sensei Petre Bulmaga (General Secretary of Romanian Martial Arts Federation), Shihan Dai Dan Matusea and Sensei Sorin Popa (NIKO Referee Committee).



Right after meeting with the Romanian officials in Bucharest, Kancho Ashihara traveled to Brasov to greet the participants who already arrived for the training camp.

During July 12 and 13, Poiana Brasov was the host of the Romanian National Camp, with almost 200 participants from 20 clubs. All training sessions took place outside, in a beautiful mounting resort, benefiting of the fresh air and the high altitude.

Below are all the Romanian clubs and their leaders, who participated at this event:

CLUB ASHIHARA KARATE Piatra Neamt (George Iacoboia), ASHIHARA KARATE Pitesti (Mihai Vatafu), ASHIHARA KARATE Pitesti CT (Stefan Ghitulescu), ATO TAMASI Pitesti (Iulian Paraschiv,) ARES DOJO DM Brasov (Dan Matusea), BIHORUL Beius (Cristian Toderici), BUSHI NO NASAKE Brasov (Paul Codau), CARPATHIAN EAGLES Brasov (Istvan Kristo), D'IPPON'NS Brasov (Nicu Dascalu), FIGHTING STREET Ghimbav (Lucian Popa), GEIDO DOJO Piatra Neamt (Costin Nicolae), GETHIKA TEAM Constanta (Nicu Vasiliu) HAPPY FIGHTERS Brasov (Ciprian Oros), IMPRESSION Bucuresti (Petre Bulmaga), SENTOKI NO SEISHIN Tg Jiu (Daniel Sorescu), SHIN DOJO Brasov (Ovidiu Turculet), SHINGITAI KARATE Brasov (Livu Tabacaru), TAI SABAKI Oltenita (Marcel Paraschiv), TIBI DOJO Pitesti (Tiberiu Tanase), ZANSHIN DOJO Brasov (Eugen Manole)

This event has been sanctioned and supported by Romanian Ministry of Youth and Sport and the Romanian Martial Arts Federation. Mr. Nicu Dascalu made this support possible with comfortable and also affordable conditions for all participants.

All the training sessions were held outdoors, at the Olympic stadium in Poiana Braşov.





Each day of the camp had two training sessions: morning and afternoon. Kancho Ashihara started the first session with basic techniques, pausing at each one of them and providing essential details. The next two classes were entirely on SABAKI techniques, and Kancho focused on the following concepts:

- *Timing*
- *Distance judgement*
- *Relaxed and fluid movements*

Last class was a review of all combinations previously shown and also SABAKI against multiple opponents. The participants were encouraged to start slow, perfecting all the details, and try to help each other in a cooperative and safe way. Kancho Ashihara had a smile on his face for the whole duration of the camp, and this allowed all participants to relax and enjoy practicing karate together.





Although Kancho Ashihara led all technical sessions, the warm up was a different experience each class. The participants had the opportunity to see and feel ideas from four different instructors, and this was another benefit of the camp.



The 2019 Romanian National Camp was also a reunion of two karate generations.

The first generation started Ashihara Karate in 1986, in a gym with a dusty concrete floor, with no heating, and most of the time without even lights. The extremely difficult training of those years was led by one of the pioneers of martial arts in Romania: **Shihan Mircea Carloganu**. He was one of the first NIKO official representatives in Europe.



The seeds planted in the concrete floor, and watered with the sweat from the warm bodies, have given rich fruits. Today, the new generation has many Ashihara Karate World Champions and multiple dojos across the country.

Below are the representants of the first Ashihara Karate generation, who joined the camp.

from left to right: Nicu Dascalu, Paul Codau, Ovidiu Turculeț, George Iacobaia, Liviu Tabacaru, Minodora Popa, together with Kancho Ashihara and Shihan Dai Saiki.



One of the members of this first generation is Sorin Popa, came all the way from Canada, to attend this camp. He now runs a dojo in Vancouver, British Columbia, where he moved 20 years ago.

Sorin is a true karate globe trotter, and 15 years ago he started traveling across Japan, in a quest to find Sendai Kancho Hideyuki Ashihara's first hand students, featured in his books and videos. Many of them became his teachers, and he still travels to Japan every year to learn from them. Sorin is now member in the NIKO Referee Committee, contributing to NIKO development.



The old and new generation of Ashihara Karate black belts have used karate in many different ways. Some of them are now successful in business, however they still enjoyed putting their karate gi on and supported the national camp. Below is a picture with all the black belts together with Kancho Ashihara.



The 2019 Romanian National Camp brought together members of different full contact karate organizations. As the Vice President of the **World Full Contact Karate Organization (WFKO)**, Kancho Ashihara is an open minded leader and has the desire to bring together members from different full contact karate organizations. At this camp we had members from Ashihara, Kyokushin and Enshin training together in a spirit of cooperation and mutual respect.



An event of this kind, bringing together hundreds of karate enthusiasts from all over the country, is also an opportunity to socialize and enjoy each other company. After training hard, everybody enjoyed the down time and of course the traditional sayonara party.

The first evening of the camp brought all the dojo leaders together for a traditional Romanian dinner. The Romanian branch chiefs had the opportunity to discuss about the upcoming 2020 Ashihara Karate World Championship in Bucharest and also about new branch chiefs joining NIKO, to strengthen the organization. The meeting ended with traditional Romanian music and karaoke in both Japanese and Romanian.

This event was possible with the kind support from the following people: Mr. Vasile Dochita, Mr. Paul Enache, Mr. Vasile Ungureanu, Mr. Gabriel Rosca and also Stana Turistica Sergiana.



The 2019 Romanian National Camp was a huge success for Ashihara Karate in Romania.

This camp wouldn't have been possible without Shihan Dai Nicu Dascalu's initiative to convince Kancho to visit Romania. He had the vision of bringing everybody together in a spirit of cooperation and respect, in order to work together for the future development of Ashihara Karate in Romania.

Shihan Dai Nicu dedicated his life to martial arts. In 1999 he was the first Romanian to become a World Champion in Ashihara Karate. He transitioned to professional K1 kickboxing where he was also very successful. In 2012, he moved on the other side of the tatami, and became the NIKO Referee Committee Manager. He was able to bring the 2013 Ashihara Karate World Championship in his hometown: Brasov, Romania. Together with Mr. Eduard Hutanu, he organized the 2016 edition of the World Championship, with no financial support from the government. He demonstrated that a small and professional team can overcome any challenges and produce a highly level World Championship, broadcasted live on a national sport TV station. In 2017, after 5 years leading the Referee Committee, he was promoted by Kancho Ashihara to be the NIKO Organizing Committee Manager.

The 2019 Romanian National Camp is another proof of his desire to develop Ashihara Karate in Romania, and also world wide.



Kancho Ashihara agreed to attend the Romanian camp every other year, and make this an international camp. This will be another opportunity for all European countries to get together, improve their karate, enjoy each other company and plan for the future development of Ashihara Karate.

