

# **Sekiguchi Komei-Soke Seminar in Katsuura and Participation at the 34th Nippon Kobudo Embu Taikai in Tokyo**

**28.01.2011 – 06.02.2011**

IAI-DO students from around the world arrived like me on the 28<sup>th</sup> January 2011 in Katsuura (Japan). Schools from Argentina, Australia, France, Japan, Austria, Switzerland, USA and Venezuela were represented. They had all followed the invitation from Sekiguchi Komei-Soke to participate the intensive seminar under his leadership which also included the participation on the 34<sup>th</sup> Nippon Kobudo Embu Taikai in Tokio (presentation).

Sekiguchi Komei-Soke made for his motivated students every day 11 hours training from the 28<sup>th</sup> January 2011 until the 4<sup>th</sup> February 2011. The workouts were very intense. Especially the five hours workouts in the afternoons. Therefore we came to our physical limits.

Sekiguchi Komei-Soke focused in the training especially on the small details of each Kata. All participants could made great progress regardless of their knowledge through the individual support by Sekiguchi Komei Soke and the good group spirit.

The training was focused on the preparation for the planned Embu on the 6<sup>th</sup> February 2011. Therefore, we trained manly the Katas (Somakuri, Sode Surigaeshi, Tatsumaki, Yaegaki, Tsukikage, Takiguruma, Chuden Bangai, Tsume-lai Yaegaki, Namigaeshi , Ganseki Otoshi and Ittomagoi sono ichi) which were included in the Embu. Nevertheless, the Nanahon and Tsume-lai Katas as well as the new Naginata technique from Sekiguchi Komei-Soke were not neglected.

Furthermore, the sequence for the Embu on the 6th February 2011 was rehearsed. We practised different formation and rotation to accelerate the person changes and to meet the tight time limit of 8 minutes for our performance on the Embu.

On the 5<sup>th</sup> February 2011, we packed our belongings after the morning training (05:00-06:00) and breakfast and made us on the way to Tokyo by taxi and train. It was time to replace the slippers with street shoes and to return to the busy world. Arrived in Tokyo, we had just enough time to place the unnecessary luggage in our new hotel, because we were already expected in Yasukuni Jinja Shrine to give an Embu at 14:00. In small groups we made presentations of approximately 10 minutes. Afterwards, we had a guided tour through the inner temple area as well as a religious ceremony to pray for a good Embu on the 6<sup>th</sup> February 2011 in Budokan Tokyo. Back at the entry of the temple we received sake (Japanese rice wine) and a small bowl to take home as a gift. We had a bit time to buy souvenirs before we all returned to the hotel. After all had taken up their rooms, we met for a joint dinner and some evening shopping for the breakfast of the following day, which could due to the tight schedule not been eaten in the hotel.

On the 6<sup>th</sup> February 2011 at 05:30 we set off to the Nippon Budokan in Tokyo where we arrived just before 07:00 and quickly moved in our changing rooms. Our rehearsal in the Budokan was at 07:00 with normal street cloths and without weapons. Afterwards we put our Montsuki (traditional clothing for presentation) on and used the time until the opening ceremony to drink a tea or coffee.

Punctually at 10:30 the official opening ceremony started with drum beat and various speeches. All participants were part of the ceremony and had to line up in rows at the designated place. From 11:30 till our Embu we were able to watch the performance of other participants from a place in the background. They also cared for our physically well-being and provided us with a lunchbox at noon.

Just before our performance we met at the entrance of the stage where we lined up for our show. On time at 14:40 our Embu started. All had given their best. After exactly 8 minutes our Embu had finished at 14:48 and we used the time to take group and single pictures at the main entrance of the building. Later we went back inside to change our cloths. With loud drum beats the 34<sup>th</sup> Nippon Kobudo Embu Taikai ended at 16:00.

For me it was an interesting, educational but also a demanding time. The fact that I have participated to such an important Embu let me feel honoured and make me pride. I could refresh old friendships and make many new ones. Despite all efforts, I would recommend this experience to everyone.

I would like to thank our Sensei Sekiguchi Komei-Soke and his team for the great organisation of this successful seminar.

All participants had hold together like a big family and worked towards the same goal, the Embu in the Budokan. The demanding training had welded us together. We have learnt a lot, trained with discipline but we did not forget to laugh now and then.

The great kitchen crew from Nippon Budokan in Katsuura deserve a big praise for all the delicious meal they created for us. They had us pampered with all the tasty meals and gave us strength for the challenging training. A thank goes also to the rest of the team at Nippon Budokan, especially for the warm water pool in the shower, which was always ready for our feet after the evening training. It was exactly what our tired limbs needed.

Dōmo arigatō gozaimasu

„Swiss President“, Hugo Ulrich

Translation: Angela Ulrich