18.9.2012

Summer Seminar with Dominique Rascle in Shanghai

For a second time Dominique Rascle Sensei followed our invitation for a seminar. Since this year we expected more guests the seminar venue was moved to the German School. So besides providing the huge dojo we were happy to use the nice facilities including clean showers which we gratefully enjoyed after each session.

Just in time one day before the seminar the 100 new mats arrived and we brought them with our 50 mats from our regular dojo to the German School. Friday afternoon after school classes finished we had a sweaty job to prepare 150sqm of mats because the old and new mats had slightly different size.

The seminar comprised five sessions of 2 hours each and during noon breaks we had lunch in nearby shopping center and a rest on the mats before the next aikido session.

We were really happy that people from five Shanghai dojos and some aikidoka from other provinces joined the seminar, also a group of five friends from Hangzhou and even two from Shangdong Province. The total number of 34 participants from so many dojos was a great reward for all the organisational work that our small dojo had to do

Saturday evening we all had lot of fun dining in a Japanese restaurant. Some of us made it to the House of Blues and Jazz for a relaxed hangout and dancing to the band's music.

During the lessons Dominique Sensei showed a variation of different waza. He again and again led our attention to one important point: attitude. Attitude does not only mean, to maintain an upright posture even when you lower your center. In the context of martial arts it includes spirit and commitment.

For me as a beginner it was helpful that he explicitly pointed out that both uke and tori should always keep moving, may the waza be done slowly or quickly. What I noticed too, was his very precise footwork which he let us watch with his hakama wrapped up.

Dominique Sensei is a very patient teacher. He demonstrated waza in a medium tempo first, then like in slow motion as well as very fast. He came and practiced with every one to experience the waza as uke. And some techniques he demonstrated the role of uke as to help tori but even more important to learn the waza. When he threw his uke in this high speed tempo, you get a good imagination, that aikido in fact is a very effective martial art!

On Sunday after the last keiko of this seminar the mild summer evening was perfect to conclude the seminar with a nice BBQ, sake and beer in a garden restaurant

This seminar was a good chance to learn more intensively Dominique Sensei's style, an exiting blend of his major teachers Endo and Tissier. Some of the participants had also joined his seminars in Beijing and Wuhan the weekends before on Dominique's annual China tour.

We like to say again "thank you Dominique Sensei for this great seminar". Also thanks to every one who joined and supported this event and we all look forward to the Summer Seminar 2013.

Henrik Koehler