

## Shinto Muso-ryu jodo "Vappu" seminar in Helsinki April 29th to 30th

International Workers' Day, or May Day (1st of May), is known in Finland as "Vappu". The associated weekend is best recognized by adults of all ages wearing their white student caps that one receives after graduation from the Finnish upper secondary school. Finland and Sweden both share this tradition of wearing the student caps when celebrating the May Day. At least in Finland, Vappu is characterized by partying and drinking (typically champagne and beer), often in excess.

For us, the Vappu weekend was no less fun, as it was spent training Shinto Muso-ryu jodo. This time we only invited people who are members of Helsinki Jodokai and kept the seminar completely domestic. This was with the intention of having more amplified focus on the quality of the Finns' technique, specifically. Thus, we invited our direct teacher from Sweden, Michael Söderkvist (menkyo kaiden), to teach for a weekend seminar. The place was once again the Cable Factory, a building that used to be an actual cable factory in the 1940s that has since been turned into a culture or multi-purpose center.

On Saturday, we started with the basics (kihon waza). Here we all received very important corrections, and we will do our best to implement them in our technique in the upcoming semester. Gradually, we moved from kihon to kata.

As for the yudansha students, Michael supervised the training of Omote series giving many corrections. This was of course very important - not only to the yudasha themselves, but also from the point of view that Omote is the series that the yudansha will be training most with the more junior practitioners. It is always interesting, humbling and educational experience for the yudansha to change the technique after doing it another way for years. Overall, here we had an excellent exchange with Michael-sensei.

The less experienced practitioners began learning or training in tokushu waza and ken kihon. The seminar was open to all members, so, excluding the teacher, we had participants from a wide spectrum: starting with a beginner and ending with someone in Gohon no Midare. Thus, the seminar was conducted with this dynamic in mind. The yukyusha and mukyusha got a lot of repetition of basics, building the muscle memory, so they will carry the skill with them to the upcoming training sessions.

On Sunday, we again started with kihon after which the yukyusha moved on to Omote waza and the yudansha into more advanced sets. Some participants were also taught new kata. Shinto-ryu kenjutsu was covered somewhat quickly: the yudansha demonstrated the series to everyone under Michael's supervision. A very noteworthy (and logical) correction was made to the fifth odachi kata, Sarin. The seminar ended with a 5th kyu exam, which was passed with flying colors. My congratulations!

I wish to thank everybody who attended the seminar and contributed to its success. A special thanks goes to Michael-sensei for visiting Finland yet again. We are very grateful and wish for similar get-togethers to continue to take place in the future.

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Helsinki Jodokai



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