

# The Sixth Guadarrama SMR Jo-Do Seminar 2013

The Sixth Guadarrama SMR Jo-Do Seminar was held by Seyryukai Spain from the 24th until the 28th of April 2013.



On this occasion we had the honor of receiving the visit from Japan of the masters Taisuke Watabe, Masami Kitta and Haruyoshi Horikoshi along with other three students, as well as more participants from our European family, among them some important names in European Jo-Do such as Michel Ducret, Fred Quant (both Menkyo Kaiden) and Kees and Wil Bruggink (Gomokurouku and Okuiri sho respectively) . Some 35 people in total took part in the course.

On the first day, after the gradual arrival of those who had a more or less long flight behind them and of those who drove them from the airport, the group came together for training. Although some were tired by the trip, all started training in the fresh air, enjoying a splendid sun and the explanations of Watabe sensei and Vicente, who translated from Japanese to English so all "european" participants could understand what was said. In these situations one understands the importance of languages, and the author of this article made a firm promise to himself to improve his level of English. We started with the Kihon, going over a part of it in detail, as we would do in all the ensuing days. We also went over the first part of the Omote series, which Watabe sensei explained, one kata after the other, stressing the important points of each one.

After taking a shower and dinner we met more calmly and presented ourselves to each other, sharing a drink and a chat until it was time to go to bed.

The ensuing days had a similar structure. Each training started with Kihon, seeing each time something different in detail. We continued with the Kata, which were explained to us in their established order from the less advanced to the more advanced ones. After each explanation, those who already knew the Kata which had just been explained practiced it. And those who did not know it yet practiced the Kata they knew. For those who, like the the author of this article, are at a low level it was a pleasure to see the more advanced Kata being carried out by such experienced practitioners.



Training sessions were only interrupted for lunch, the night's sleep and little else. The training timetable took advantage of the available time as much as possible. Tiring, but enjoyable for those like the author of this article who lives far away from the Dojo and therefore cannot train regularly with Vicente and the rest of the spanish group. We savored every minute of this Gasshukku .

The weather was nice for the first two days, in which the temperature was good and we could train outside nicely. But on the third day the temperature fell and it started to rain, weakly and intermittently at first. This forced us to alternate between training outdoors and training under some great porches where we would not get wet. On this day we received a sobering fright as Fred had an incident during training, which in the end had less serious consequences than we had feared. On this day the more advanced practitioners trained up to Kage and the rest up to their current level.

On Saturday it was so cold outside that we started training inside the facilities. The available space was ample, but with so many people it forced us to organize ourselves. This we did until the sun came out of the clouds and we could leave, for training on the fresh air is always preferable. In the afternoon we trained kenjutsu where those like the author of this article who lacked knowledge of it did what they could.



On Sunday, separated into groups by level, we trained each at his or her uppermost level. Later the beginners were mixed up with the more experienced practitioners so they could take advantage of their experience and expertise until the end of the seminary. After finishing there was a bit of a hurry because we all had to quit our rooms, some had to hurry to catch a flight back home and had to be driven to the airport, so there was not too much time left for saying goodbye, but I heard that the rest of people went to enjoy a gorgeous lunch together in a restaurant nearby in the mountains.

All in all, taking into account that the author of this article is a fresh beginner in Jo-do and this is his first Gasshuku his conclusion is that it was a tiring and stressful but gratifying and enriching experience, worthy of being repeated as soon as possible.

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