

Gasshuku in Brazil with Kees Bruggink



In Germany they say that “God lives in the south of France”.

This might be true, but the son definitely lives in Rio, with open arms over the city

It was with enormous pleasure that we received Kees sensei and Wil for 12 days in Brazil during which he gave a two-day gasshuku, intensive training during the week in Rio de Janeiro and a one-day gasshuku in Belo Horizonte from March 31st until April 12th.

The fun started in the evening of the 31st, when after I picked them up at the airport, we had a small barbecue on our terrace. Next day we had the first training session at the playground of the building where Silke and I live, followed by another barbecue (after all this is Brazil, and we are proud of our beef!), this time with Alberto Ferreira, José Ortega and José Carlos Pires, the three group leaders who are responsible for keeping SMR Jodo alive in Rio de Janeiro. Even though we had great fun, we finished early, as on the next day the gasshuku in Rio would start at 09:00 at the German Club in the neighbourhood where we live.



The group picture of the participants in Rio.

On Saturday the 2nd , 8 practitioners from Rio, plus Shikanai Sensei and one of his students (who both travelled from 600k away Belo Horizonte to train with Kees and Wil) spent the whole day going through suburi and the basics, which was a great opportunity for all of us to review things, learn exercises and find common ground for our technique.

In the evening, I cooked a simple dinner and all participants had the opportunity to have a meal together, as well as what Shikanai Sensei calls a “theoretical class”, which basically is a chance for the students to ask questions to the invited teacher in a relaxed environment.

On Sunday, we started with Kihon Sotai, which we managed to cover until Kuri Tsuke. According to Kees, there must be some “time warp” in Rio, because when we finished this technique we realized that we had been training for more than three hours, and we made a break for lunch. After lunch we broke the afternoon in two, using the first half for Kenjutsu and the second for Jo kata.



Kees and Wil demonstrating Kiri Otoshi



The last cut of Sarin

By the end of these two days almost everybody had received new techniques, as well as reviewed the ones they already had. We had great fun while doing serious keiko, and in my humble opinion, I can't imagine training being better than this!

As we were going to fly to Belo Horizonte only on Friday, we organized keiko sessions of about 90 minutes every day both in the morning and the afternoon, using the middle of the day for sightseeing and a bit of rest from the heat.



Relaxed no-gi training from 07:30 to 09:00 at Ipanema beach , followed by a breakfast of freshly squeezed juice and sandwich.

On Friday the 8th, we boarded a plane to Belo Horizonte, where we were received by Evaldo, the same student of Shikanai Sensei who went to Rio with him for the first Gasshuku. After taking us for a fantastic meal of local dishes at his home, he left us with Shikanai sensei, who had reserved hotel rooms for us really close to his home. In the morning of the next day, we went to a beautiful wooden dojo constructed in the Japanese style in the middle of the forest. This dojo had been inaugurated by Nishioka Sensei 15 years ago, and the group comprised of Aikido students who never trained SMR before, as well as people from the Jodo group with different levels up to Ran-ai.



The group picture from Belo Horizonte.

The Sunday was reserved by Shikanai sensei not only for taking us to the central market in Belo Horizonte, but also for having some coffee while he translated parts of Nishioka sensei's book on Budo, including a chapter with the second part of the well know article "Uchidachi and Shidachi". We returned to Rio on the same day, with everybody hoping that this great experience will be the first of many to come.



Shikani sensei translates Nishioka sensei's book while Kees takes notes; waiting for lunch at the Central Market.