

## Basel Gasshuku Report. Spring 2016



After some hesitation about the feasibility of the event due to last minute cancellations, Yves, Jean-Louis and I, finally agreed (as quality is not a matter of quantity), and decided to maintain the Gasshuku, but to change the training location because of financial matters.



We were about ten jodoka to gather for training on this rainy weekend of May. The beautiful conference room of the library (with a nice wood floor for our delicate feet) opened its doors for us. As we got into our hakama, Yves asked me about the meaning of "Jōshin". A very accurate question (I do believe great minds meet...) as I intended to talk about it presenting Pascal's calligraphy on "Jōshin Dōjō".

So I did after the "shomen ni rei". First I mentioned my relation with wood through my carpenter ancestors. Then I referred to the symbolic aspect of the wooden stick; an image of the tree that is anchor to the ground (the present) and also this relation to the chakra where energy and creativity are anchored. "Jōshin" as "the spirit of the stick", means a way to practice Jodo, a way to feel and live, intensively and creatively.



We started Saturday's training with Jodo.

After a warm up with Kihon, Yves told us about his special program for the Gasshuku. (This program is to be continued on our next Gasshuku):

First a presentation and exercises on Kihon tandoku and sotai, then an application on different kata chosen among the series of the school, from Omote to Okuden.

During the afternoon, Jean-Louis initiated us to five fundamental principles of Kenjutsu called Gohō: Maki Otoshi, Kiri age, Kiri kaeshi, Uke nagashi, Kiri Otoshi.

We first approached these principles through a demonstration and then a cutting of the movements, showing the hips importance and hanmi positions. Then through a search for fluidity we could approach the timing, the precision and the minimalist aspect of the movement (doing only what is necessary and sufficient).



In the evening we all met around the table with Mexican dishes: guacamole and enchiladas "Luco's way". We end up with two great chocolate cakes (one brought by Yves and made by his cousin from Fribourg, the second one made by Véro, a family secret recipe...). We managed to watered the whole meal with moderation (red wine by Simone, A Floch de Gascogne by Jean-Louis) so we could get with much conviviality to serious discussions to rebuilt the world...



Sunday morning complete breakfast: fruit juices, scrambled eggs, moutarde de Bénichon (by Yves), bread, cheese and pain au chocolat (by Sascha). We left in great shape for the morning exercises. As some of us had left to join their family, we were a smaller group to train on Sunday. The morning exercises were lead by Jean-Louis and we started with some Kenjutsu Uchikomi and then back to the exercises we had discovered on Saturday. The afternoon began with Jo Kihon and exercises related to Ken and Jo, working on hanmi and gyaku hanmi positions. Later we practiced different series of kata through different level groups so the more advanced could also execute series like Samidare, Gohon no midare and Okuden.

In conclusion, we all had a great opportunity to practice new exercises linked to everyone 's level. We approach Kenjutsu and Jodo with a united mind. The fact of being a small group allowed us to receive a more specific and personal teaching in the sense of Ishin denshin. I feel that the group left the dojo with a great feeling of having learned new technics and good practice within a very convivial surrounding and under the great benevolence of our teachers. The smiles and the good energy showing on the group picture is the refecton of those nice moments we had together.

To all, a great thanks!

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