



Report of the Summer Camp 2017

The European Judo Federation held its 2017 Summer Gasshuku in Tirrenia, Italy, close to the town of Pisa, from July 28 to August 5. This was the second Italian edition, after the one held in Lignano Sabbiadoro in 2004. In addition to high-quality and intense technical work, the seminar was yet another occasion to celebrate and strengthen the family spirit of the Federation in a joyful atmosphere.

Participants from 18 countries were present: 15 European countries, plus Australia, Malaysia and the USA, totalling the respectful number of 129 trainees and 6 accompanying persons. Also, the Technical Committee was present in almost full ranks, with 15 teachers of the Federation plus Glen Henry from Australia, under the lead of Pascal Krieger, Seiryukai Sandai Shihan.



Operations started on Thursday, July 27, when the Organizing Committee formed by Maria Rosa, Roberto, Daniele and myself reached the CPO (Olympic Preparation Center) in Tirrenia, to prepare for the start of the program on the next day, with the arrival of the teachers. On Friday, Mario joined the staff and everything was ready for the start of the Teachers' training on Saturday morning, followed by the class dedicated to Group Leaders in the afternoon. Saturday, July 28, ended with a lively group presentation after dinner, in which all attendees received their 'welcome kit', including a customized personal tag calligraphed by Maria Rosa, *shodô hachidan*, with every name brushed in *katakana*. All groups were mutually welcomed by cheerful, booming choruses in their own language. That was a perfect preparation for the official opening of the seminar on Sunday morning.

PK pronounced a welcome speech in impeccable Italian and proceeded to explain the calligraphies he made for the *shômen*, which also featured the portraits of Shimizu Takaji Katsuyasu Sensei (1896–1978), SMR Nijugodai Shihan, and Nishioka Tsuneo Yasunori Sensei (1924-2014), Seiryukai Nidai Shihan.



The calligraphies were “Shintô Musô-ryû Jô”, brushed in *reishô* style, and two inspiring phrases, conceived by PK himself as a reminder for everybody, teachers and students, to consider one's own practice in an intimate and sensible manner: the one on the right read “Having not experimented life-and-death combat, teach with humility” and the one on the left “As life-and-death combat is improbable, train with gratitude”.

The program called for two full days of training in the field, under a generous sun, which forced us to look for some shade during the pauses. As usual, we started before breakfast with Kihon Sôtai and ended in the late afternoon. The separation in three, sometimes four groups, created the opportunity to get the best from the presence of many teachers, with no less than 6 Menkyo-kaiden. PK, again as usual, focused on the less experienced, of which we had a large group, including some absolute beginners. Indeed, this seminar was characterized by a high number of new trainees, many of them young and dedicated – a promising stock for the future of the Federation.

The technical program covered the full span of the Shintô Musô-ryû *jô* curriculum, plus Shintô-ryû *ken* and Uchida-ryû *tanjo*. As customary, the seniors could train also in Ikkaku-ryû *jutte* and Isshin-ryû *kusarigama*, complemented by a fascinating extra: an introduction to *shuriken* by Jonas, a longtime expert.

On Monday, in the evening before dinner, we enjoyed a puppet show in the garden. Two specialized artists from Naples joined us to present their astonishing abilities, Irene giving movement and voice to her characters and Marcello singing and playing his guitar, all in strictly traditional Neapolitan dialect. Another remarkable characteristic of this performing art is transmission: no written scripts, the plays of the “Guarattelle” are orally bequeathed from a generation to the next, since the 16th century. Needless to say, stick fighting was one of the highlights of the show... Pulcinella is a long-standing *sensei* in the art! The day program ended with the traditional *shodô* conference by Pascal, *shôdô shihan*.

Tuesday was the Cultural Day and the participants enjoyed either some rest at the center, with a sprinkle of practice under the expert hands of Alain, or one of the two options for a tour in the region: one group went sightseeing the marvels of Pisa, especially the “Cathedral square” also known as the “Square of the Miracles”, followed by a wine-tasting visit to a local producer; the other headed for Lucca, another of Tuscany’s medieval gems, followed by a guided tour to the magnificent Cave of the Wind.



On Wednesday, the technical program resumed at full pace for two days and a half more, Friday afternoon being devoted to a dense agenda with *shiken* (examinations), *embu* (demonstration), the awarding of traditional certificates and the official closing... but that wasn’t the end! All attendees were summoned once again to the field to attend a performance of crossbow shooting and flag waving offered by the Lucca Crossbowmen Company. This put the “fire in the hole” for the ensuing Sayonara Party!



After a pair of cakes decorated with the symbols of the Federation and of the seminar, a merry toast introduced the group to a long evening of dancing and singing with a blues-rock band, just arrived from Roma with their instruments and loudspeakers. I will not spend more words on that, as the images found in the photo album prepared by Camilla, our official photographer, will speak volumes about those moments, as well as many other events and courses during this rich week.

Therefore, let me close this report by some acknowledgments. First, to my fellow members of the Organizing Committee, who all worked much (and much more than me) in the long preparation of this wonderful seminar and in its smooth running towards a very gratifying ending. Also, I would like to thank all the cheerful band of the Italian participants who, in their orange T-shirt, were co-opted to help out with various chores during the week, giving a fundamental contribution to the implementation of many activities. Then, I would like to thank all the participants – some of whom made a very long journey to join in – it was such a pleasure to share this week with all of you!

Finally, I would like to offer my heartfelt gratitude to Pascal Sensei and all the teachers, who supported all our initiatives with enthusiasm and provided a wonderful teaching throughout the week, making this Italian edition yet another memorable event in the history of Shintô Musô-ryû in Europe.

Lorenzo

