

ISBA-Report of the international youth exchange Program 2014 between the Shiseikan Budojo (Tokyo, Japan) and the Aikido Dojo Mainz (Mainz, Germany)



Participants

Leader of the Aikido Dojo Mainz: Camilla Möbes

Assistants: Jannis Petry, Judith Kämmer

Interpreter/Cultural-Adviser: Annika Hansen

Adolescent students (14 – 18 years of age): Phillipp Demmler, Junes El Bargui, Jan-Thomas Frenz, Denni Pruss, Duncan Keßler, Linus Keßler, Moritz Maier, Guilian Spiga, Maximilian Schlippe, Rashmita Ufer

Preparation-phase

- Intense training
- Basic studies in Japanese culture, religion, history, etiquette, language, and scripture

- Study and discussion of “Keihatsuroku” by Hashimoto Sanai, as well as “Japanese Mythology” and “What is Budo” by Inaba Minoru sensei.
- Screening of a film about the Meiji Jingu, and a documentation about the Yasukuni Jinja
- Lecture about Shinto by Annika Hansen (expert)
- Several special events in order to strengthen the team spirit

In-procedure

- Individual training sessions with Inaba sensei, Araya kancho, Yanase sensei and Udagawa sensei
- Individual round table talks with Araya kancho, Uematsu sama, as well as with Inaba sensei and his students
- Guided visit of the Meiji Jingu, as well as of several shrines and temples in Kamakura with Uematsu-sama
- Guided visit of Kashima Jingu with Inaba sensei, special-training at the Kashima Budojo
- Guided visit of the Imperial Palace, the Yasukuni Jinja and the Yushukan with Araya kancho
- Concluding discussion with Inaba sensei, Araya kancho and Uematsu sama

Wrap-up-phase

- Debriefing of the journey, slide-show with the parents
- Study and discussion of the book “Researching Japanese Budo” by Inaba Minoru sensei, and “Budo - Path of spiritual refinement” by the Meiji Jingu Shiseikan Budojo
- Writing of reports and reading impressions
- Refreshed, intense training in Aikido as well as Kashima-no-Tachi (the first series), increased attention on exercises to strengthen the inner centre (e.g. shiko)

Future Prospects

- Strengthening of the Budo Spirit of the participants and thus of the Aikido Dojo Mainz
 - Integration of the studied literature and the culture-class into the regular curriculum of the Aikido Dojo Mainz
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Educational value of the program

- Promotion of Budo education based on Shinto spirit as it is exemplified by the honourable Shiseikan Budojo
- Encouraging of values like loyalty, bravery, modesty, courtesy, love of truth and thus fostering a heart of sincerity
- Cultivation of determination, a serious training habit, and a passion for Budo
- Encouraging young people in finding their own "michi"
- Broadening of the horizon

Advise for future procedures

It is a great advantage to have the support of a professional interpreter/cultural-adviser, who should be involved in the planning of the project as soon as possible.

Impressions

“When I started with Aikido the sword wasn't particularly important to me. I did not have a clue what role the sword plays and why it would be important to practise with, since my main focus was on Aikido. In Japan I learned that the sword is indeed important. Kesa Kiri for example is the main and basic move on which a lot of Aikido techniques are based. Once at sword training I began realizing how important precision is! At that evening one student trained Kesa Kiri with me for about an hour, correcting me once and once more, giving advice, which I appreciated a lot because it made me realize that I made some progress.”

- Rashmita Ufer



“I was able to make out three important requirements and criteria for focusing your life- and center-energy during these two weeks. The first important point is concentration on the spirit of the moment, another one the synchronization of breathing and movement to maximize energy, and, maybe the most important point, being absolutely determined. You

have to overcome your own nervousness by being calm, centered and brave. You have to overcome yourself to be able to defeat your opponent.”

- Junes El Bargui

“Before this journey I did not care too much for the development of my inner centre, now I know that it is most important, since it allows me to perform the techniques with less physical strengths, but much more accurate. [...] The intense training in Japan inspired me to train now more than ever.”

- Denni Pruss

“As I was studying for a school projects I tried to maintain a high level of focus using the techniques I had just learned in Japan. Because I have not allowed anything to distract me I was able to shorten the learning session considerably and I also received first positive feedback in form of better grades.”

- Moritz Maier



“Especially our trip to the shore of Kashima will remain on my mind - as Inaba sensei trained in the middle of storm he did not hesitate, he did not let himself be distracted. It could have been a sunny day for all he cared. Without batting an eye-lid he let his bokuto cut through the wind as the raging storm was dragging on his clothes. This impressed me deeply. This showed me that you cannot always just wait, especially not for better weather conditions. The samurai would not have called off a battle just because of rain or wind.”

- Jan-Thomas Frenz

“The training we have enjoyed in the Shiseikan Budojo changed my idea of Aikido. It changed from supposedly a sport towards a lifestyle, an ethos, a way of thinking that is including mind and body as well.

- Duncan Keßler

