



December 25th, 2022

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Kyoju dairi (teaching representative)

About the seminar in Slovakia



On the evening of November 21, *Somucho* sensei, who was scheduled to go to Slovakia, tested positive for the coronavirus. As a result of coordination with Stefan sensei (Slovakia), I was requested to go to

Slovakia alone.

And so I went to Slovakia by myself.

I could hardly sleep on the 21st and 22nd. I was told to "go alone," and from the moment I decided to go, my personal life disappeared into thin air, and I just had to do everything I could think of one by one. I had to deliver the luggage to his grandson.

At 4:30 p.m. on the 23rd, I left my house in the heavy rain with two pieces of luggage. Since I had already sent my luggage to Narita Airport, I had to change my luggage at the airport, so I left early for the 10:30 p.m. departure.



At Narita Airport, I packed some baggage to be sent back to my home, except for the minimum necessary items including souvenirs to be checked in 30 kg. I checked in early and headed to the gate, but it felt like my first time at the airport.

The plane was almost full because the Qatar World Cup was being held at the time.

I could not sleep during the 12-hour flight. After arriving in Dubai, I took the elevator and escalator to the gate for my connecting flight, and had no time to look at stores. There were few people wearing masks, just a few coughing people here and there.

We arrived at Vienna International Airport a little after 1:00 p.m. local time on the 24th. Immigration was easy, and when we went out of the exit, Stefan was waiting for us with a bouquet of flowers and a smile on his face. We went to his house about 45 minutes away from the airport, put our luggage in the guest room where we would be staying, and he showed us around his house and dojo, which is about 30 tatami mats in size. The garden from the living room was lovely and was decorated with chic Japanese ornaments and frames.

On the following day, the 25th, from 9:00 a.m., a presentation was held at the "Bratislava Private High School for the Protection of Persons and Assets" by Stefan's students from 12 classes of 4 grades, practicing "Daito ryu Aikijujutsu, Aikido, Judo, Muay Thai and MMA (Mixed Martial Arts Self-Defense Techniques)". The current enrollment is 310 students, more than double the 93 applicants for the new term in September.



The event was attended by Ambassador Nakagawa, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to Slovakia, Chairman of the Slovak Olympic and Sports Committee, Head of the Bratislava Metropolitan Police Department, Personnel Department of the Slovak Republic Military Command, and many VIPs.

The distinguished guests seemed to motivate and encourage the students even more. In addition, the first-place class received the "*Somucho* Katsuyuki Kondo Cup" and the second-place class received the "*Kyoju dairi* Sumie Hasegawa Cup," and plans were made for them to participate in a special training session with me on Monday, the 28th. I was very impressed with the care and concern that Stefan had for the students and for us.

On Saturday the 26th and Sunday the 27th, the Daito ryu Aikijujutsu Closed Seminar was held for the first time in three years. The close seminar brought together more than 50 students from 13 countries, including Europe and as far away as the United States, to practice after a long absence.

On the first day of the seminar, all the students practiced altogether for the first hour, and then the group was divided into two groups, one for dan promotion and the other for other dan examinations.

In the short time of two days, we paid maximum attention to enriching the training of the dan examiners and other students and also checked on each student individually while observing the whole group. During the



training, at the suggestion of Branch Director Stefan, we connected with General Manager Sensei, who was recuperating, by video, and everyone had a chance to talk with him and to watch the whole training. A

"Welcome and Farewell Party" was also held that evening, which included a traditional dance performance and other activities. When I returned to my room after 11:30 p.m., my "Budo Passport" was waiting for me in my room.

I filled in the date and name on the passport, and the name of the place was stamped by Stephan's wife, who said, "Don't worry, we'll stamp it! She gave me a hand and said, "Don't worry, it will be stamped! I would like to thank Mrs. Stephan's wife for her warm hospitality and support.

On the following day, the 27th (Sun.), we continued our training, and in the afternoon, we held the dan promotion examination. Seven students passed Shodan, three Nidan, and one Sandan.

All of them also passed the 100 *ukemi* test.

On Monday the 28th, we had a special practice session with the top two classes (3rd and 4th graders) from the presentation held on the 25th. All of the students have been practicing since they entered the school, so they were able to catch on very quickly, and even though they did not understand each other's language, they were able to practice with the much taller students in a very short time.

On the 29th, we went sightseeing at Schönbrunn Palace with Stefan's wife, and in the evening, Stefan and I went to an opera for the first time invited



by an acquaintance of the general manager. The program was "The Sorrows of Young Werther. I would like to go see the opera again if I have a chance.

On the night of the 28th and 30th, we were taken to a town where a Christmas market was being held, and on the night of the 30th, Martin, Stefan's best student, showed us around.

On December 1, I will return to Japan with 65 kg of luggage, including 40 kg of souvenirs for the teachers from the students in each country. Stefan and his wife drove us to the airport, although we could not join them for a farewell lunch because there was no restaurant in the airport, He made sure that we checked in and that our travel bags were ready for pickup at Narita, and waved to us until we were out of sight at the gate. By the time I finished the departure screening, I received a confirmation email from Stephan, the branch manager.

From Vienna to Dubai. At Dubai International Airport, we took a moving train (?) I took the train (?), elevator, and escalator to the gate leading to Japan, and walked along the road for what seemed like an eternity. I could hardly sleep on the return flight, and arrived in Japan at 6:00 p.m. on the 2nd, with my legs still aching. Thanks to the fact that I had registered my vaccination certificate, MySOS, Visit Japan Web, etc. in advance, I was able to enter Japan relatively smoothly.

I had to go to Slovakia by myself in a hurry, but with the support of my teachers, and with the cooperation of Mr. Stefan and other high-ranking



students, I was able to complete the two days of the seminar. Still, I could feel how much everyone wanted to meet *Somucho* sensei.

Thank you very much.