

Aikido – Seminar on the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> of February 2014

## Axel Rabenhorst Sensei

5. Dan

*„Berlin – always worth the journey...”*



There are many reasons to visit Germany's capital, but they are, nevertheless, always interesting ones, such as attending a play in one of the many theatres, enjoying the international cuisine, going on a shopping trip on the bustling Kurfürstendamm or visiting the sugar museum – just to mention a few. This metropolis leaves nothing to be desired.

It is also a centre for Budo. Almost all styles – from traditional to modern Budo – can be found in Berlin. Anybody who is really interested in the different Budo styles and does not want to travel all around the large city in search for them, would be in good hands at the Sportschule Dento (college of physical education) in the borough of Zehlendorf.

The seminar takes place on the first weekend of February under the direction of Mr. Axel Rabenhorst, Sensei, 5<sup>th</sup> Dan Aikikai, who is also the owner of the Sportschule Dento. It doesn't matter whom I asked, everyone feels like home at his Dojo which might be of his very uncomplicated and straightforward typically Berlin manner. Everybody is integrated into everything at his dojo.

Axel Rabenhorst Sensei started his seminar with an extraordinary warm up – he asked some students to "tear down the partition wall" between his two dojos. This strengthens the team spirit and has the wonderful side-effect that all participants have enough space now on the 200 square meters big mat area to train forward rolls. After this all students and of course a lot of Aikido teachers are warmed up and can start with the training units now.

This year's focus of Axel Rabenhorst sensei will be weaponry - *Buki waza*. Rabenhorst Sensei is showing and teaching the techniques *Tanto dori*, *Jo dori*, *Tachi dori*, *Ki musubi no tachi* and *Ju san no jo kata*. Centre point is defending against an attack with a cut and thrust weapon around forms of the blunt or sharp force. Transformed to the emergency on a self-defence situation this means



there is no *uke* training with a *nage*, but a doer and a victim will be face to face. For this reason Axel Rabenhorst Sensei only taught easy and efficient techniques.

To reach this level the seminar started with some basis trainings like *Tai no henko* and *Morote Dori kokyo ho* from where Sensei Rabenhorst started an unbelievable journey to unarmed techniques of *Tai jutsu*. For



further basis techniques he uses *Morote dori* and trained defenses of *Irimi nage* and *Nikyo*. During the trainings of *Tanto dori* Rabenhorst Sensei he differ from the standard attack. The doer now grabs with his free hand the clothes of the victim at the breast and tries to attack with the knife which he holds in the other hand. In a preliminary practice we trained to stab someone. This was done in clockwise rotation. Axel Rabenhorst Sensei showed the defences for this

attack. It is situational either to seize the knife leading hand directly or to make way for her first at the attack. In the latter case the adopted victim then grips the hand of the perpetrator from behind and is now in a very safe and dominated position. From this position you could lever the arm and disarming the attacker. Alternatively you are in the position to throw the doer.

At the End of *Tanto dori* we started for a lunch-break which is traditionally held in an Italian restaurant close to the dojo. The only three not Berlin course participants, inclusive me, felt very welcomed in the group – just like members of this wonderful AIKIDO family, so don't hesitate to visit the next Aikido Seminar with Axel Rabenhorst Sensei in Berlin.



After lunch the techniques against weapons were continued. Regardless which *Tanto dori*, *Jo dori* or *Tachi dori* Rabenhorst Sensei always has a close body contact to the perpetrator, so that he could permanently step into action to control him in every situation. Actually Axel Rabenhorst Sensei won't give a chance to the doer to escapes from him. It doesn't matter to the defender how strong or how tall the attacker is. To give prove of he did a very impressively demonstration by showing the detailed defences on knees against a 2 meter tall, very strong student who attacks Rabenhorst Sensei with a knife.

Time flies like an arrow and Saturday Seminar ended but everyone is in pleasant anticipation for techniques on Sunday.

*Ki musubi no tachi* and *Ju san no jo kata* are the topics of training on Sunday. Rabenhorst Sensei visualised the principles of *ki musubi no tachi* in a demonstration. He masters his adversary in every situation and makes considerably clear to him that he cannot execute any further attack movement. Otherwise it would have a considerable self-injury as a consequence. A blockade of the hands leading sword which is simple and harmless looking forms the completion of this exercise. The perpetrator is controlled in all phases of *Ki musubi no tachi* and signalled to stop to him. He gets the chance to do so repeatedly. The sword exercise is short and easy looking but by training it you will realise that it will need a lot of training to get the right timing on every step of the movement. Every single movement starts and comes from his centre.



The conclusion of the course is formed by the *13er-Jo Kata*. At first the seminar leader shows this movement pattern step by step with his partner. This Kata can be practised with one, two or three partners. Rabenhorst Sensei chooses the latter form here. Another training effect lies in the form of *ki no nagare*. The victim must move very fast between the perpetrators and avert the attacks from different directions.

The techniques explained and shown by Rabenhorst Sensei are short and efficient; no movement or grip is too much or too little. Everything he performs and explains is clear and comprehensible to everybody. He attaches importance to the foot position, hip use and the position inside the Nage and the Uke. The seminar participants always have plenty of time to practice a new technique. He always puts an eyes on what his students are doing. If he realizes a mistake, he will correct it immediately. If a participant asks for a detail, Rabenhorst Sensei gives a comprehensive answer.

On Sunday noon the Seminar ended – unfortunately – but it was a very exciting seminar with a good atmosphere from the beginning to the end. A cooperative Aikido family!

My conclusion: Berlin is worth a journey.

