

# Kobe 2007

Japan – 2007

Once again the annual pilgrimage to Kobe was held in August. The heat at this time of year is intense however; it suits us to go at this time because the UK clubs are quite due to school Holidays.

The Samurai Instructor party consisted of two groups, one from England under Shihan Tom Beardsley UK Chief Instructor and one from Wales under Sensei Jim Whittington Samurai Wales Chief Instructor.

Having learned our lesson the previous year, we opted to train in the evening with the group lying low during the day due to the intense heat, most people though, chose to shop and sight see during the this period.

## International Trip

This year Samurai World Chief Instructor Shihan Paul Mitchell had organised an international visit so it was good to catch up with Samurai Country Chief's Darren Olson and Andrew Kowanko from Australia and New Zealand respectively.

## Training

The training at the Hombu dojo was great, we covered four senior kata, Unshu, Seisan, Saifa and Sochin. Needless to say there were a few small adjustments for those who already knew the kata. The relaxed style of Kawata

Sensei's teaching was superb and we managed to learn one kata per session and then revise on the previous day. Kawata Sensei has kept meticulous notes on his learning under Master Tani and it was very special to follow in the Shukokai path of such great



Masters.

## Culture

After the each training sessions the instructors were free to sample Japanese culture, some chose to visit the popular Karaoke bar whilst others visited a traditional Japanese spa bath. The last night saw everyone come together for a "Happy party" which was held at a very plush hotel.

## Grading

At the end of the course there were the traditional

grading exams, however this time it was announced that Kawata Sensei would be grading individuals in the three levels of karate-do;

Dan level = Technical  
Shido = leadership  
Shugo = Personal Development

The grading was intense and no one was spared, everyone had to demonstrate their understanding of the weeks teaching. The exam lasted about two hours and with the test finally over Kawata Sensei announced the following results.

## Dan Level.

Darren Olson - 6<sup>th</sup> Dan

## Shido – Leadership

Jim Whittington – Shido  
Andrew Kowanko – Shido

## Shugo – personal development

Tom Beardsley – Kyoshi  
Darren Olson - Renshi  
Ronan Mitchell- Renshi

These results were a great honour as note many westerners are allowed the chance to progress through the SHUGO system so a very well done to all concerned.

## On going success

To finish the week on a high, sensei's Tom and Jim were told to prepare for the next dan grade exam when Sensei Kawata visits the UK during May 2008. "Well lads looks like time for some serious preparation".

Reports by

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