

Fall 2014 Shimbukan Gasshuku Oct 6th to 11th - Vancouver, Canada

by William Chung

The mild fall weather of Canada's West Coast was the perfect back drop for the fall Ryukyu Kobudo Shimbukan Gasshuku held in Vancouver, British Columbia. Not only was this the first Shimbukan Gasshuku held in the City of Vancouver, but for Canada as a whole. For Hiroshi Akamine Kaicho, this is his second visit to Canada, with his first being twenty years ago when he came on holidays.

Day 1

Both Akamine Sensei and Kagemasa Yoshimoto Sensei arrived in Vancouver, weary eyed and fatigued, in the early afternoon at the Vancouver International Airport. William Chung, the Chief Instructor for the Vancouver Shibu Dojo and the host for this event, picked them up and took them home for a bit of rest. The best cure for jet lag was a good lunch and a trip to downtown Vancouver for some sightseeing.

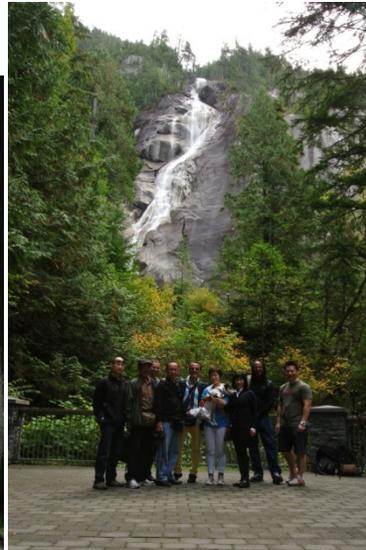


Day 2

After a good night's sleep, Akamine Sensei and Yoshimoto Sensei met up with Dell Hamby Shihan from Switzerland and Jerry Holt Sensei from Minnesota, USA for a site seeing trip to Whistler, British Columbia. Also joining us on this trip were Alice, Brittany, Garson; from the Vancouver Shibu Dojo, Thomas Ruegge from Switzerland; and the Club mascot; Bullet, the Jack Russell. En route to Whistler, we stopped at the Britannia Mine where everyone had a chance to look at some First Nation's art and the beautiful scenery.



After Britannia Mines, we headed over to Shannon Falls and savoured more of the beautiful sights. Both Yoshimoto and Hamby Sensei found the perfect ray of light amongst the trees. Shannon Falls is the third highest fall in British Columbia stretching up 335 metres.



The town of Whistler was the official site for the 2010 Winter Olympics. During the winter months, it is transformed into a winter wonderland for skiers and snowboarders. In the summer, the town is the place where avid mountain bikers take to the trails.



Day 3

For Day 3, we began the day with a trip to Stanley Park. This is one of Vancouver's most famous sites. On this trip, we were also joined by Sandy, from the Vancouver Shibu Dojo, and her husband George.



Ohh, did we mention that Yoshimoto Sensei really like trees? We also met a famous Hollywood movie star, John Travolta, while we were there.



The evening was the first session of the gasshuku. The session began with kobudo training, where Akamine Sensei went over some of the nuances of the bo basics.



The second session was karate oriented with Akamine Sensei providing instructions in Shorin Ryu karate and how it differs from the mainstream Japanese karate. The session was well received with it ending with a demonstration of the kata, “Seisan” demonstrated by the following Sensei:

Shorin Ryu-Tim Jurgens, Uechi Ryu-Dell Hamby, Shito Ryu-William Chung, Isshin Ryu- Jerry Holt, and Wado Ryu- Bob Mooney



Day 4

The day began with a trip to North Vancouver and a visit to the Lynn Canyon Park. Many of the folks from the Lonsdale and White Bear Dojo also joined in on the trip and added to the festivities.



The evening was spent with everyone working on the bo and sai. Akamine Sensei spent time with everyone reviewing their kata and providing expert advice to better their techniques.



Day 5

In the morning, we set off to Granville Island, the public market area for Vancouver. Here Akamine Sensei and Yoshimoto Sensei got a chance to see some of the craft stores and savour some of the fine and diverse tastes of a multi cultural community.



The evening was spent practising the special weapons: nunchaku, tonfa, tinbe-rochin, and nicho kama. Again, the expertise from the Shihan present was invaluable to all those that took part in this session.



Day 6

For Akamine Sensei and Yoshimoto Sensei, Day 6 was a day to catch up on some sleep. The jet lag can be quite draining when one has to invest both physical and mental energy into the teaching. So for the better part of the day, they both kicked back and relaxed and prepared for the night time grading. For Yoshimoto Sensei, he needed to pick up some gifts for his students. For those that weren't aware, Yoshimoto Sensei and his wife, Setsuko, have their own dojo on Kume Island, which is 90 Km from Naha, Okinawa. Yoshimoto Sensei found some Canadian chocolates to bring home.



The evening grading session for the gasshuku was nerve racking for all the participants. The early session was spent with a quick review of everyone's mandatory kata. Then it was time for the exam, starting with the special weapons, followed by the bo, and then the sai. Everyone poured their energy into the test and they all did very well.



Congratulations to the following members in their grading results:

Shorin Ryu Mukenkai: Dan Bellig-3rd Dan, Sam Murray-3rd Dan, Bob Pettitt-Provisional 3rd Dan, and Ryuka Jurgens-Jun Shodan

Ryukyu Kobudo Shimbukan: Tim Jurgens-6th Dan, Jerry Holt-3rd Dan, Thomas Ruegge-3rd Dan, Kyndell Harkness-2nd Dan, Denise Buss Callen-2nd Dan, Alice Chung-2nd Dan, Brittany Chung-2nd Dan, Bob Mooney-2nd Dan, Sam Murray-Shodan, Jan Marie Andersen-Shodan, Greta Hittner Bennett-Shodan, Raiden Chung-Shodan, Johnny Hermann-Shodan, William Joe-Shodan, Sandy McLaughlin-Provisional Shodan, and Gerry Van Gaalen-Provisional Shodan

Day 7

Day 7 was a full day workshop. This was a session that catered to everyone's ability from beginners to advance kobudo practitioners. This session covered basics as well as kata for the majority of the weapons in our syllabus. Akamine Sensei also taught bo versus sai and demonstrated the techniques of the latter as an effective weapon. Also present at this session was Mario McKenna Sensei and his students from the Ryukyu Kobudo Shinko Kai. Don Shapland Sensei and Norm Losier Sensei from Ryukyu Kobudo Tesshinkan also dropped by to say hello to Akamine Sensei.



After the session, we headed to a Korean Restaurant to celebrate Akamine Sensei's 30th birthday...hence, we brought out "two" birthday cakes...



Day 8

With the Gasshuku over, it was time for everyone to relax and enjoy their visit to Vancouver. For Akamine Sensei and Yoshimoto Sensei, this was an opportunity for them to enjoy a bit more of Vancouver's sights like Gastown, Chinatown and Queen Elizabeth Park. This was also an opportunity to catch up on a bit of shopping.



This day was also Thanksgiving Day in Canada. To celebrate this event, it is a tradition to have a nice turkey dinner. So Alice Sensei and some of the Vancouver students prepared a nice Thanksgiving dinner at William Sensei's home for Sensei.



Day 9

The last day of visit for Akamine Sensei and Yoshimoto Sensei were spent eating a lot of food. The city of Vancouver is truly a diverse community offering some of the best cuisines the world has to offer. The night was capped off with a visit to La Casa Gelato, an ice cream parlour that boasts to offer over 218 different flavours of ice cream.



Day 10

Day 10 marks the final day in Vancouver as we see both Akamine Sensei and Yoshimoto Sensei off at the airport. At the conclusion of the first Shimbukan workshop in Canada, the students from the Vancouver Shibu Dojo want to thank all those that took part. A special thanks to all the Shihan and Sensei that traveled great distance to attend and support this event. And to Akamine Sensei for sharing his knowledge and techniques in Ryukyu Kobudo with everyone in Canada-arigato gozimasu!

