



The first visit of a Ueshiba family member in South Eastern Europe

In September 2014, Cluj-Napoca, a Romanian city, was the host of a double Aikido event, both parts being premieres for South Eastern Europe. The development of the Art through Romanian Aikikai Aikido Foundation (RAAF) has been really amazing in the past few years in Romania, so that, by this event, with no trace of doubt, a page of Aikido's worldwide history was written, this autumn, in Cluj.

Located in the Western part of Romania, Cluj-Napoca is one of the largest cities of Romania and it has been the host of the biggest Aikido event ever organized in this part of Europe, between the 8th and the 14th of September 2014, as we mentioned before, through its specific national organization - Romanian Aikikai Aikido Foundation (RAAF).

The event drew, for sure, the attention of the entire Aikido community, but also of the entire martial arts community and it was organized in two main parts. The first part was the board meeting of International Aikido Federation (IAF), in order to debate and establish the organization's strategies for the next 4 years to come. The second part was IAF's International Aikido Seminar that had as a very special guest, none other than Waka Sensei, Mitsuteru Ueshiba, the great-grandson of Aikido's Founder O'Sensei, Morihei Ueshiba. Waka Sensei lead, during the seminar in Cluj-Napoca city, 3 practices that will surely be impossible to forget for those that took part in the event, both Romanian, but also aikidokas from other 22 countries that attended the seminar.

And we all "spoke" Aikido

In the gym of the Sports College in Cluj, situated on Arinilor Street, number 9, all aikidokas and masters "spoke" Aikido, for 3 days in a row, through the basic elements of the Art. Waka Sensei presented the basic elements as: irimi, tenkan, circularity and kokyuhō, but also all other 6 great Aikido masters insisted on the basics elements of the Art, although sometimes the "dialect" may have been different. What do we mean? Well, the specific terms may be different, but the principles are the same. We all know that tai no henko and soto tenkan mean the same thing, they illustrate the same principle.

During the seminar, practices have been lead by 7 of the biggest Aikido masters, worldwide known: Waka Sensei - Mitsuteru Ueshiba, Christian Tissier Shihan (France), Ulf Evenas Shihan (Sweden), Peter Goldsbury Sensei (IAF President), John Rogers Sensei (vice-president IAF), Kei Izawa Sensei (General Secretary IAF) and Wilko Vriesman (Member of the Board of IAF and also Chairman of the Dutch Aikido Foundation).

Everybody and we mean everybody, men, women, young, adults, children and seniors, all practiced with joy for

all the 12 intense practices, during the 3 seminar days, on 12th – 13th – 14th of September 2014 and once again, we must say that we all "spoke" Aikido no matter the nationality.

On 14th of September, Sunday, after the ending of the practice sessions, there could be watched the live demonstrations of all the 7 masters. During the seminar, the audience had free access in the building, so that anyone interested in stepping on The Path of Harmony could watch and find out more about Aikido and its principles and start "speaking" Aikido once and for all! What for? For a more peaceful world!

Not only the presence in Romania and in this part of the world of a member of the Aikido Founder's family and the IAF board meeting made of the Cluj city event the largest and the most important ever held in the region, but also the important number of aikidokas and the diversity of their nationalities.

465 aikidokas took part in the seminar, from different Romanian Aikido organizations and also from other 22 countries from 5 continents. We mention here the countries that had aikidokas on the tatami: Japan, France, Belgium, Netherlands, Taiwan, Croatia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Republic of Moldova, Ukraine, Russia, Peru, Poland, Serbia, Sweden, UK, South Africa, Slovenia and USA.



Waka Sensei in Klausenburg (Cluj-Napoca) © Photos Horst Schwickerath – September 2014.
www.aikidojournal.de/ or www.aikidojournal.fr

The next 4 years in terms of IAF's strategies

Between the 8th and the 11th of September, the first part of the event, which will remain forever in the memory of all aikidokas that "spoke" Aikido those days, IAF's Board analyzed and agreed upon the strategies that the organizations and its members will follow for the next 4 years, the future partnerships and the attendance at the Sport Accord – World Combat Games (WCG) events, the international organization that joins both Olympic and non - Olympic activities, such as Aikido. At the Sport Accord events, Aikido will be represented through demonstrations. Next Sport Accord meeting will take place in 2015, in Sochi, Russia.

At the same time, the IAF's representatives discussed about possibilities to encourage as many women as possible to practice Aikido. The Path of Harmony is for all those interested, no matter the gender, age, weight, religion or nationality. The only thing im

portant is to be willing to learn how to "speak" Aikido, through practice.

Another debated subject was the procedure for other members to accede to IAF, in the future. At present, it is possible to accede at IAF only every 4 years, when the board meets, at the same time as the Congress in Japan. For an organization to accede it has to be followed by a voting procedure, by IAF's board members.

The next IAF Board Meeting will be in the fall of 2016, in Takasaki city, Japan, at the same time as the International Aikido Congress. As you all probably already know, the IAF board members meet once every 4 years, outside Japan and also once every 4 years in Japan, during the International Aikido Congress (also taking place once every 4 years), resulting a meeting once every 2 years for all international entities.

RAAF's tale, part of world- wide Aikido's tale...

The existence and development of

Romanian Aikikai Aikido Foundation (RAAF), based on the Art's principles and tradition, lead Romania to become a part of the worldwide Aikido's history, together with the September 2014 event in Cluj city.

Nowadays, RAAF is the largest Aikido organization in Romania, having about 3,000 aikidokas and over 50 dojos, in almost all the country's counties. In Romania, there are other Aikido organizations, but RAAF has also the recognition of Hombu dojo, Tokyo, Japan.

Moreover, Masatake Fujita sensei, 8 dan Aikido Aikikai, one of the direct students of O'Sensei Morihei, was the person that instructed, from the technical point of view, the Romanian RAAF's leaders. Also, Fujita sensei helped with the development of Aikido and RAAF in Romania, following the Art's principles. RAAF is lead by Dorin Marchiş sensei, 5 dan Aikikai Aikido, who holds seminars in Romania, as well as abroad. 

Paula Alexandrescu-Bucharest, Romania.