

The Trip to Kazan'

At the end of December 2003 Kohai Anton Berezhnoy (3rd Kyu) and I took part in the Seminar in Kazan' (Russia). We traveled there by the train for almost 48 hours. The seminar was led by the master from Japan, Kaicho of IKO 4, and Shihan Toru Tezuka. Sensei Boris Belov (4th Dan), who represents the interests of IKO 4 in Russia, organized this Seminar. It spanned 4 days. Also, Karateka from Alma-Ata (Kazakhstan), Novosibirsk, Moscow, Syktyvkar and other parts of Russia took part in this Seminar.

Shihan Tezuka didn't look healthy when went to Kazan'. Recently he had had an operation on his legs. So rhythm and nature of the Seminar training was not very strong; the training in our organization is technically stronger, and harder. I understand that it was the first visit of Shihan Tezuka to the Russia but I suppose that the training could be more spiritual. Nearly all those training for this Seminar had been oriented to preparing for their forthcoming promotions. During two days we had training, we did each Kata that was necessary for their promotions. But the execution of these Kata was very different from the way Phoenix Kata are executed. There was also training devoted to Self-Defense and Kumite. But we were not able to to fight; only testing participants had some Kumite.

Tests were during the third day of Seminar. Of course there were many differences not only in Kihon, Kata and Kumite but first of all in principles and approach to the training and other. The outline of this Test was: Kihon, Ido Kihon, Kata, and Kumite. All Karateka who took part in promotion were organized in a group and lined up. Shihan Tezuka supervised them and later made the decisions as to their promotions. Karateka had been promoted both to primary and high levels (including Black Belt, 4 Dan). I think everybody had been promoted, though this hadn't been announced. The general time of all promotions was 2.5 hours. Many Karateka were very surprised why we with Anton didn't take part in promotion. I tried to explain that we have Giri before our Organization related to promotions and other, but it seemed to me that they didn't know this word. As I understood it was very unusual to meet someone who wasn't going to promotion during such seminars.

Mainly the goal of our trip to Kazan' was exactly to socialize with Shihan Tezuka, a carrier of traditions who had been near to origin of developing Kyokushin Karate. I think that we accomplished what we set out to do.

Photos taken during this Seminar are available on the website of The Phoenix Karatedo Association.

Sensei Nataly Snyegir'ova, Sandan