

THIRTY YEARS OF MONTENEGRO SENSEI AIKIDO PRACTICE

In the warm and sunny Foggia during the seminar under the direction of Daniele Montenegro sensei 5th Dan Aikikai, held this year on the 14th and 15th of October 2017, we celebrated the thirty-year practice of this outstanding professional teacher of the deeply respected school of Fujimoto sensei.

Thirty years of practice took their beginning in 1987 when he was just five years old, and then he continued practicing off the reel, being passionate about aikido he left Turin in a very young age to join Fujimoto Dojo.

Then, for all I know, after hours and hours of training under the exceptional but exacting and strict direction of Maestro he became one of the closest assistants and teachers in that dojo.

I met Montenegro sensei when I, being enthusiastic and delighted, took part in seminars of Fujimoto sensei.

This boy, being very young at that time, seemed to me being endowed with the unusual and surpassing technique of performing as uke for Fujimoto sensei, whom he assisted in doing very elegant nevertheless powerful Aikido, with impressive speed and flexibility.

Fujimoto sensei was pulling, pushing, or alternating between upper and very low positions, Montenegro sensei was holding on, rotating, going down and successfully buckling, to my mind, it was incredible and amazing – to follow his sensei as if it was the simplest and most natural way possible.

I can say "Simple" because sometimes I experienced on myself what it means to be uke for Fujimoto sensei, it was not simple at all, just the other way round, very difficult. "Natural", perhaps it was indeed for Montenegro sensei, but only because he possesses completely unusual physique that in combination with his unique aikido story, helps and supports him.

I was able to know him as a teacher only when he began to act independently, after he opened his dojo Aikido Montenegro Dojo in Milan, and when Fujimoto sensei left after two years of heroic and respectable fight.

I invited him to give a seminar in Foggia just few days before the death of Fujimoto sensei. And since then our cooperation began, which I hope will last for long, because seminars under his direction are always of great value, interest and enthusiasm to students, and I always feel the effect of revival which I felt after the trainings of Fujimoto sensei.

More than five years after that first seminar, I can say that this bet was a winning one.

My city and my dojo are among the places where Montenegro sensei arrives, along with foreign countries such as Poland, Malta, Switzerland, Macedonia, Serbia, Russia, Germany, Croatia, Tunisia and even Vietnam and Indonesia, that is the evidence of undeniable value of such a teacher, and that he is ready to share his experience with those who invite him and want to continue following him.

During each seminar in Foggia, and in other places also (as someone else, predominantly in the South, finally started to invite him to give seminars), I'm enjoying the approach to aikido that so seduced me, and that Fujimoto sensei allowed me to savour.

A good understanding of the techniques and mechanics of the basic movements, the clarity of why waza is carried out in one way rather than another.

What uke should do, what is the correct communication between one who performs and one who accepts. Spherical shapes, dynamics, mutual respect and attention to each other without any damage to health.

That was the approach of Fujimoto sensei, which Montenegro sensei perpetuates by being passionate and extremely attentive to his technique and teaching methods.

His intention is to convey this knowledge, continuing with the same approach, so that Aikido of Fujimoto sensei lives after its creator, and so that this incomparable experience is not lost.

The seminar under his direction has been a source of pleasure and inspiration, as always.

On the first day working on yokomenuchi attack, with side-entrance, but much more complex than the usually executable form. ikkyo, kotegaeshi, iriminage, main techniques.

On Sunday, defense against knife, chudan tsuki attack. Working with techniques of gokyo, shihonage, kubishime and again with kotegaeshi. Without any falsehood, both in the face of seriousness and commitment, the work proceeded, as it should, in a concentrated but at the same time calm atmosphere.

The seminar was held at a very high level, and more to the point, not only locals but also aikidokas from different regions took part in this seminar.

I hope and believe in that first thirty years of Montenegro sensei practice will be followed by decades of growth and development in terms of technique and teaching of such a young but already very experienced teacher with a great future.

Knowing him and talking to him, he really believes in continuous improvement, in work, in dedication, in constant search for perfection wheresoever.

I hope to see him practicing for a very long time, strict and passionate, as the most worthy and credible follower of his beloved and admiring mentor.

Congratulations, Montenegro sensei!

We have already booked a gym for the forty-years anniversary!

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