



20TH and 21st September – Jun Shihan Roger Thyer-Jones and Kyoshi Bogdan Czaplak with students at the seminar held in Wadowice

I was invited by the Seido Polish Federation to take a two day seminar in Poland and my wife, Michelle and I traveled out to Poland on Thursday where we were met by Senpai Rafal Czaplak, the son of Kyoshi Bogdan, at Krakow airport.

We drove to Kyoshi's house which is on the outskirts of Wadowice and situated in a pleasant forested area with beautiful views of the countryside and stayed with his family during our time there. On Friday Kyoshi Bogdan and his wife, Sofia, took us on a sightseeing tour of Krakow and it was a mild sunny day so we got a real flavour of the town.

If you visit there yourself, if you haven't seen the Royal Palace and the cathedral they are a good point to head for. The National Museum in the cloth hall should be included although we didn't have time to see it. You should not miss the Veit Stoss alter in St Marys. That's the church in the main square where the bugler sounds his call each hour and the sound breaks off abruptly in memory of the Mogul arrow which hit him during a siege !

Veit Stoss I think is the finest wood carver of the Medieval period (possibly of any period) I have seen. It is hard to believe that such carving was achieved with simple tools and the carving is opened every morning and closed at night. It is in three parts and abounds with gold leaf. The anatomy of some of the figures is so good that modern day doctors can study the leg of one of the figures and tell what was wrong with him !

Historically the area which runs from Saxony along the N Czech border, Silesia the Carpathians and into Ukraine is packed with history. Wadowice is the birthplace of Pope John Paul II and is a lovely small town with a very well kept town square. The Seido dojo is run in the new Gymnasium which has seating arrangements and is a multi functional area. It was here that the seminar was run.

There was a good mixture of black belts and kyu grades and nearly all the black belts ran or assisted in running one of the 30+ Seido clubs that now exist in Poland with nearly 2000 students. Three years ago Kaicho Nakamura accepted Kyoshi Bogdan and his organisation into Seido and since then instructors and

students have been working hard to ensure that they are fully up date with the challenging Seido syllabus.



Students practice Seido Strategy

Kaicho visited Poland to officially accept the organisation into the Seido family and since then Nidaime Akira has visited to run a seminar there. My visit was the third such visit. I found the students to be very enthusiastic and keen to learn so on day one we covered Seido strategy, Black belt Kick Punch combinations and some advance self defence techniques. Day two focused on combination training including yonjugodo for different grades, and then I set each grade a task to demonstrate before me and Kyoshi Bogdan their grasp of the material taught on Saturday.

Of course they were nervous but they all did a great job and it was a tribute to them all that they were able to display the material under some pressure to such a good standard.

Kyoshi Bogdan is building a private dojo in his house and so we were able to complete some private training together as well.

On Saturday night Michelle and I were their guests at the black belt dinner where we were able to mix informally and get to know each other better. Finally on the Sunday, I was presented with a book about Wadowice signed by all the students and Michelle was given an lovely pale green amber bracelet – amber can be seen everywhere in Poland and is always a great gift.

We left for the UK on Sunday afternoon and Kyoshi Bogdan drove us back to the airport. My Polish had improved a bit but has a long way to go ! We enjoyed the energy of the students and the clear dedication shown by both students and their instructors. We were warmly welcomed and very well looked after during our visit and Kyoshi Bogdan was talking about another visit next year even before I got out of the car.

Seido Poland has clearly established itself in a short time and I was most impressed with all they have achieved under the leadership of Kyoshi Bogdan. I have also to congratulate Senpai Rafal for doing a first class job as an interpreter – a very demanding role. Our sincere thanks to Kyoshi Bogdan and his family for inviting us into their home and making us feel so welcome. Osu.

**Jun Shihan Roger Thyer-Jones
1st October 2008**