



Kazoku Kai International

India 2007

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Visit to India 2007

On a damp wet morning 29th January 2007 our party consisting of sensei Derek Ridgway, sensei Ian Nicholls, tour manager Maurice O'Callaghan and general maintenance expert Keith Rogers. (Roach) We left Birmingham airport flying with Emirates via Dubai, destination Cochin airport Kerala South India. After a long but comfortable flight with a brief stopover in Dubai we arrived on schedule at Cochin airport at 9am Tuesday 30th January. There to meet us was chief instructor for KazokuKai India sensei Madhu Viswanadh and his wife Mridula. We were all quite tired by now and after about one hour's drive we arrived at our hotel (Dreamland) at Triprayer near Trissur. This was to be our temporary home for nearly 3 weeks and I must say we were ready for a rest after our long journey.



Next day after breakfast we were booked for a press conference in the city of Trissur. As is normal at these affairs loads of press throw questions and take photos. As press will, they do try to make you say something controversial but we survived the ordeal and got quite a good write up in the press next day. Later that afternoon we were taken to the local beach which I must say is totally stunning and not a soul on it. We enjoyed a swim in the warm waters of the Arabian Sea.

Next day sensei Madhu took us to a nearby town where a festival was to take place. When they have a festival in India they really go to town. This was only small by their standards but there were thousands there, loads of elephants and men wearing some of the strangest headgear we have ever seen. It all builds into a crescendo of noise with drums being banged, horns being blown etc. It really was quite a spectacle and unlike anything seen in the west. Later that day we again went to the beach it would be our last chance to relax as there was to be a big international camp the coming weekend with hundreds of students coming from all over India and the Gulf states. We enjoyed our rest and prepared for what we knew was going to be a very busy weekend.

It was now early Saturday 3rd February and on time as ever sensei Madhu picked us up from our hotel to take us to the venue for the camp. It was just after 8am when we arrived and already the place was buzzing with people running about going about their duties. The camp was to be opened by various VIP's from both government and business and before long we were all sitting together on stage in front of the gathered crowd in the hall. After various speeches from all concerned (including us!) the camp was formally declared open with the lighting of the ceremonial lamp.

Sensei Philip Young from Sheffield had joined us the day before to assist in the instruction on the camp. Looking at the numbers attending we were going to need him as several hundred students lined up in the hall ready to train.



Saturday's training saw the sessions split between seniors and juniors with all instructors rotating their classes so all attending got to train with each instructor in turn. The theme for the day was to be Kihon (basic techniques) firstly with attention to detail. This led on later to Kumite (fighting techniques) and partner work. Everyone worked really hard including the instructors remember this is south India with high temperature in the mid 30's and humidity which made it seem even hotter. The instructors had to take regular drinks of rehydration fluids to put

back the lost water and minerals. At the end of the first day there were presentations for the juniors who

had attended along with some photo shoots. National Indian TV were also there filming for the news to be shown that night all over India. We retired to our hotel by around 6pm totally exhausted. Next day Sunday was to be for seniors of brown/black belt grade only we again arose early and after breakfast set off again for the venue. As mentioned previously today was just for brown and black belts and we had our 3 instructors namely sensei Philip Young, sensei Ian Nicholls and sensei Derek Ridgway. Sensei Philip was to teach advanced advanced kumite techniques. Sensei Ian was going to teach kata Niseishi to the kyu grades. While sensei Derek was to teach kata Anan to the black belts. All went according to plan with all having a great days training the black belts particularly enjoying Anan kata and its bunkai. This was the first time this kata had been seen in India and was highly appreciated by all the black belts who attended sensei Derek Ridgway's class. As ever there were all the awards and closing speeches to be given at the end of the camp. But we all agreed it had been a great camp and much credit must go to the instructors and the organiser of the camp sensei Madhu Viswanadh who made sure the camp ran from beginning to end so smoothly and without any hitches. The next few days were to see a break from training with sensei Madhu organising a trip up into the mountains to see some tea plantations and hill stations. This would be a welcome break for us from the heat and humidity at sea level. Sensei Philip Young his student Paul and his girlfriend said their goodbyes and headed off to Varkala a beach resort further south. They were on a different flight home to us so we wished them well and went our different ways. The first place we headed for in the mountains was a place called Kodai Kanal which was formally a hill station but is now a hive of tourist activity. It is a very beautiful place with a large lake right in the centre which is surrounded by mountains some of which are over 8000 ft high. The temperature in Kodai was much more suited to us, in fact at night it went quite chilly and we had to put on the fleeces to keep warm. Madhu had rented us an old fashioned English style stone cottage which really was beautiful set in stunning scenery. We had various trips out and about around the area and we could not believe how green and beautiful it all was. What a diverse place India was we could have easily been in the English Lake District. Like I said amazing and so different. From Kodai we headed on to Munar another hill station not quite so high up but equally stunning for its scenery. This time we stayed in a fine hotel. Next day we were off to explore the area and first thing was a VIP trip in some speed boats on a large lake up above the town of Munar. These boats were owned and run by the Indian government and Madhu had managed to pull some strings in the corridors of power and we were given a rare treat of speeding across the lake in our speed boats. Later that day we went up to Top station which is very high up and a real wilderness. No roads or towns to be seen just the odd trail and little settlement with no electric or running water. Next day we were to travel back to our hotel near Trissur at Tripprayar where we had left the majority of our luggage. Saturday and Sunday was to see us back in action at Madhu's hombu dojo for KazokuKai India. We were there to teach and also to conduct gradings from Shodan upwards. The Hombu dojo in India is quite small but it has a great atmosphere we have taught there many times and it is a special place for us. About 30 people and it is pretty full but at times it can have twice that number as I said compact but what an atmosphere. Most of the training was to re-cap what had been covered over the previous 6 visits. Sensei Ridgway also introduced the continuous bunkai for the 5 pinan kata. These are unique to KazokuKai and all member clubs must know them as part of their syllabus. Sensei Nicholls re-capped kata Sanchin, especially its principles. This really warmed the dojo up but it was a great session enjoyed by all. One of the main events was the black belt grading and awarding. Those who were successful are as follows.

Shodan

Jeeva. K Saji.
Noufal. M K.
Sumi. P.S.
Akash. E.P

Nidan

Jamshid.R.M.
Rema Shanminghadas.
Abdul Sathar.A.C.K.
Jayesh.S.V.

Sandan

Ajithen.M.S.
Mridula Madhu.

Godan

Madhu Viswanadh.

Our congratulations goes out to them all, well done!

The last few days saw us relaxing and generally winding down after the hectic last two weeks. We went to the beach, travelled to the city for shopping and visited an elephant sanctuary. It was nice to take life a bit slower but before we knew it we were packing our bags for our flight home to the UK where we hear it has been snowing. (Ouch) We said our goodbyes and left our hotel at 6am on Friday 16th February. Madhu was to come with us to the airport to see us off. We shook his hand and thanked him for everything it had once again been a truly magic trip enjoyed by all.

THE NEXT TRIP TO INDIA IS PLANNED FOR EARLY 2009.

SPECIAL NOTE FROM SENSEI DEREK RIDGWAY CHIEF INSTRUCTOR FOR KAZOKUKAI INTERNATIONAL.

I would personally like to thank the owner and staff of hotel Dreamland who looked after us so well. I would also like to thank our driver Munil who kept us safe on the Indian roads. (not easy) my thanks also goes to all the students helper's organisers etc who helped make the trip such a success. To all who came and supported the training camps, my thanks goes out to them. Finally a very big thank you goes out to Sensei Madhu Viswanadh and his wife Mridula. Kazoku means family and they certainly looked after us like family. Nothing was too much trouble. From the moment we met at the airport until the moment we left we could not have wished for finer hosts. I will miss them both very much and wish them all the best in their future endeavours, and look forward to seeing them again very soon.

