

The Taiwan Adventure

Text: Dr. Angelika Trabert/Photos: The Therapeutic Riding Centre of Taiwan

From the 30th of October to the 6th of November I had an exciting week in Taiwan. After a successful competition at the WEG in Kentucky and two weeks of vacation in Down Under, I was invited to come to Taiwan. The Hope Cup was planned for the 6th of November and my hopes were to bring some of my knowledge to the Far East and share some of my ideas and thoughts with all the interested people.

Before I even got there, I received a phone call from the German Curatorship, informing me that I had won the FEI award "Against all odds", which I could receive in Taipei from the hands of HRH Princess Haya at the Gala dinner marking the end of the General Assembly. So my schedule became a bit tighter, but luckily everything worked out well, thanks to Uta's great organizing skills. My saddle arrived without a problem together with my "Far East Helper" Amrei Becker.



At the FEI Award Ceremony with Amrei Becker (l) and Uta Rindfleisch-Wu(r)

The following day was for me the most exciting one, because I tried the horse they had been providing for me. Java, a 21-year-old chestnut gelding, who had been in Taiwan for four years. The gentle tall guy had only a problem with standing still when being mounted, I believe due to a back problem. Amrei's ground work helped us and with lots of patience we managed to get on him. Once mounted he was incredible and remembered everyday a bit more of his earlier training. He tried to please us with movements like simple and flying changes, shoulder in and even a few passage steps. Only the deep footing on the beach volleyball field where the display in front of HRH Princess Haya took place, kept us from a top performance and made it very difficult for him.



With Java at the ThRCT's Hope Cup

We were able to prove our qualities however during the opening ceremony of the Hope Cup, which made me very happy since I wanted to show especially

to the participants what is possible, even on a borrowed horse. Hopefully they realized that it is their will and their ability which will drive them towards success.



Receiving a Commemorative Plaque from the Taipei County Magistrate, Mr. Chou Shiwei

But that was not all we did, Amrei worked from the ground with one of the therapy horses and I had the chance to give Taiwan's PE riders some advice and ideas.

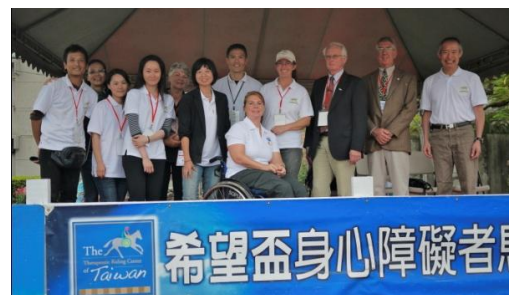
Uta had also organized some sightseeing in Taoyuan County as well as a visit to the palace museum and the Chiang Kai-shek-Memorial Park. We also stayed at the Hyatt Hotel in Taipei for a night and discovered Taipei 101, the second tallest building in the world.

The media was present everywhere, I gave a couple of interviews and was impressed when the children of an elementary school who gave a great show for me, were told to watch TV the next day to see me ride. No matter where we went, the warm welcome of the Taiwanese people was overwhelming.



With the students of the Elementary School

The Hope Cup had 17 participants from 4 countries (Singapore, Hong Kong, Australia and Taiwan), who gave their best on borrowed horses, judged and advised by Ulf Wilken, the Swedish Chairman of the FEI Para Equestrian Committee, and Nick Rodgers, Hong Kong. In Europe we are now fortunate to be able to ride our own horses at competitions, but this is not the case in the Far East. As I was competing on borrowed horses till 2000, I have a lot of experiences with different horses and I want to encourage all the riders to continue their work. It is always a challenge, but you can learn from each horse you ride, as I did from Jaya this time, whom I thank for such great rides.



A big thank you goes to Uta and all the people who made it possible for us to come. It was an adventure and we feel very lucky, since we met so many new friends in Taiwan!