

In association with the OSHU KENDO RENMEI

The Secretary's Report for the year ended 31st. January, 1966.

Gentlemen,

1. Since my last report presented one year ago British Kendo has increasingly found itself in the forefront of a growing European Kendo movement and during the past twelve months much work in connection with the Oshu Kendo Renmei has been undertaken by our Renmei.
2. Dealing with the home developments first, I have the honour to report that three new Kendo dojo have been established and that two of these have gone beyond the 'teething' stage and are now flourishing. These are the Toraji Kendo Dojo in Liverpool, (Leader: Mr. Victor C. Cook, shodan); and the Butokukan Kendo Dojo in Brighton under myself. The third, the Reading Kendo Dojo under Mr. Maddams, is gradually finding its feet and requires encouragement.
- On the other side of the picture we seem to have lost all contact with the Norwich Kendo Dojo who never seemed to have the correct spirit and we must regard this dojo as defunct.
3. The welcome return from Kyushu of Mr. Jock Hopson, nidan, in September has had the effect of jerking the Kendo in the South out of its period of 'marking time' and a great improvement in standard is already becoming apparent in those Kendoka fortunate enough to have frequent contact with the Shinto-Ryu Kendo Dojo. This improvement was anticipated by the yudansha of this Renmei as you will recall from my last report.
4. In April we were fortunate to have a visit from Mr. Oura Yoshihiko, Kendo Kyoshi, who brought direct news of Mr. Hopson's training at the Yubukan Kendo Dojo, Fukuoka-shi, Kyushu, and Oura Sensei practised at the Shinto-Ryu and Bushi-Budokai Kendo Dojo.
5. Mr. James Mathie, nidan, left for Japan in the summer and is now firmly established at the Sainei-kan Dojo of the Imperial Palace, Tokyo. His direct sensei is Mr. Matsunaga, the Team Captain of this strong dojo. Mr. Mathie reports that his training is extremely rigorous.

Very great importance is attached to Mr. Mathie's visit to Japan both by the Eikoku Kendo Renmei and the Zen Nippon Kendo Renmei who take the view that by training Mr. Mathie to become a skillful Kendoka able to instruct properly on his return to Europe we are laying a proper foundation for the whole future development of British and European Kendo. Mr. Takizawa, Mr. Yamada Senta, and Mr. Matsunaga, are giving Mr. Mathie every encouragement to continue with Kendo according to a report received from Miss Horie Etsuko.

6. Professor Nakajima Yasuji, sandan, returned to Japan in late March and in September Mr. Watanabe Susumu, sandan, arrived in England. Since his arrival, Mr. Watanabe has been extremely active in his efforts for this Renmei and has visited several dojo especially the Shinto-Ryu. All dojo should note that Mr. Watanabe is prepared to visit them if they wish during his vacations from Cambridge University but they must cover his fares and look after him in accord with the policy of this Renmei.

7. In May last we were happy to be the hosts of Mr. Oyama, the Japanese Minister in London; his wife; Sir Frank and Lady Bowden, and their sons; at the Shinto-Ryu Kendo Dojo then at the Avondale Hall. This was a combined display of Kendo and Karate. Mr. Oyama is actively interested in the British Kendo movement and remains in touch with us through our Vice-President, Sir Frank Bowden.

8. In June last year the Secretary of the Eikoku Kendo Renmei visited Stockholm to further European Kendo. The purpose of this journey was two-fold. Firstly, to establish direct and personal relations with the Swedish Kendokai who are under the capable leadership of Count Robert von Sandor, Secretary-General of the Swedish Judo Association and Chairman of the Oshu Kendo Renmei. Secondly, to take part in the Summer Training at the Stockholm Kendo Dojo and to lead intensive study of Kendo technique over the period of the ten day visit. In both these aims I have the honour to report success.

It is intended to make a further visit to Stockholm this year for one week for similar purposes but also for detailed consultations with the Chairman, Count von Sandor, on methods of placing the Oshu Kendo Renmei on a fully operative basis. Also to examine our relationships with the Zen Nippon Kendo Renmei and the various national Renmei elsewhere in the Kendo world.

I would stress, gentlemen, that these aims of the Oshu Kendo Renmei are of the most significant nature for the growth of Kendo in the future in this part of the world, and it is vital for us to show active interest in this field and organise an effective scheme demonstrating our willingness to work hard in the Kendo cause to the Directors of the Zen Nippon Kendo Renmei for us to hope for more active support from that direction in the future.

9. We have also been approached by the Association Belge d'Aikido, Kendo et Arts Martiaux lead by M. Jacques Dupont of Brussels, through our Chairman, Mr. R. A. Lidstone, with a view to joining the Oshu Kendo Renmei and for assistance in developing Kendo in Belgium. Correspondence is continuing at frequent intervals and will be the subject of a special report when we reach a joint satisfactory conclusion.

10. Last Autumn some proposals concerning the implementing of a new system of finance for the Eikoku Kendo Renmei based on a per capita levy of all Kendoka but being the responsibility of the dojo were circulated and discussed with the dojo leaders, and in principle these proposals were agreed. It is not proposed that this scheme should be put into operation until possibly later this year, but I would re-iterate the argument for this scheme that it will give all our Kendoka a feeling of being personally concerned with the expansion and growth of Kendo both here and on the Continent.

This feeling should be our guide for the future - a common aim, a common purpose.

Brighton, 22nd February, 1966.

Roald M. Knutsen

Roald M. Knutsen,  
Secretary-General,  
The Eikoku Kendo Renmei.