

ŌSHŪ KENDŌ RENMEI

Report by Secretary-General on
the events and discussions in To-
kyo and Osaka from 2nd to 8th Oc-
tober, 1967

Brighton,
27th October, 1967.

As is known, the EUROPEAN KENDO RENMEI have received a very honouring invitation from the ZEN NIHON KENDO RENMEI (All Japan Kendo Federation) for participation in the international kendo mach held in Tkyo and Osaka in October this year.

EKR have also been invited to the negotiations about the development of kendo outside Japan and to the forming of the INTERNATIONAL KENDO ASSOCIATION (Kokusai Kendo Renmei).

Those facts pointing out the recognition of EKR as the official head for kendo in Europa, EKR is now regarded as authority by the ZEN NIHON KENDO RENMEI.

To our regret - since EKR have no economical asset- we was not able to send official european team to the competitions but - as a special concession from the Z. N. K. R. and trough the Japanese Foreign Office - we have had the favour to send Mr ROALD M. KNUTSEN, England , both to the competitions and negotiations.

Mr KNUTSEN who is the most experienced and best qualified non-japanese kendoka in Europa and as the Secretary-General of the EKR he is an executive officer on high level in our Renmei, have been provided with all necessary powers for the negotiations. He should also take part in the individual maches as european representative.

Mr. KNUTSEN arrived extremly good results, both as competitor and as negotiator and gave the european kendo exellent public relations in Japan.

He have been graduated to yon-dan (4th) by the japanese kendo authorities.

As the chairman of EKR I like to recommand his report for very penetrating study - particularly in the pharagraphs 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 - and hope that this matter will be the origin of a strong and rapidly growing kendo in Europa.

Stockholm and Lidingö in November 1967



Count Robert von Sandor of Sandorfalva
Chairman



ŌSHŪ KENDŌ RENMEI

Outline Report by Roald M. Knutsen, Secretary-General, on discussions and agreements made in Tokyo - October 1967.

Brief: My brief, agreed by all the principal officers of the Renmei, was an open one in the widest sense. Generally I was to meet and discuss such problems as I considered necessary and also to discuss in an executive capacity matters relating to the proposed Kokusai Kendō Renmei.

The domestic questions I felt we should discuss were promotions, certificates, equipment supplies, and the possible future visit of a master for an extended period.

Results: 1. Promotions

The primary question of promotions into and within the dan degrees, particularly the lower dan were considered with Dr. Ito Hanshi, Takizawa Kyoshi and Nakamura Kishiro Kyoshi. The principles that we have already drawn up and published are agreed by the Z.N.K.R. and we are assured that our dan rankings will be internationally valid. The above three sensei consulted with the Z.N.K.R. before replying.

2. Menjō (Certificates)

To give authority to rankings given by the Ōshū Kendō Renmei certificates will be issued by the Renmei under the signature of the Chairman and the Secretary-General but will carry in addition the signatures of five high ranking Japanese sensei. All menjō will carry the official seal of the Oshu Kendo Renmei.

Proposed designs for the format of these menjō will be made in Japan and sent for our approval shortly.

3. Degree of Promotion

The Ōshū Kendō Renmei may make promotions on its own authority up to and including san-dan without reference to the board of senior sensei mentioned above. Promotions may be recommended to the Renmei by any yūdansa two ranks above the rank he recommends to, but must be referred to one or other of the Renmei's executive yūdansa for approval. Visiting yūdansa, that is non-resident, of any rank, may not be asked or make promotions without the prior knowledge of the Renmei, but they can recommend such promotions.

4. Authority for Rankings

In the case of promotions to san-dan or above, we are urged to pay attention to good authority for such promotions and therefore the existing system of temporary promotion followed by confirmation by the next official high ranking sensei to visit should be followed. This system will secure respect for rankings, especially those given by the European (i.e. the non-Japanese) yūdansa, throughout the Kendō world.

5. Equipment.

Existing sources of equipment were arranged for us specially by Takizawa sensei in Tokyo and Mr. Matsumoto the managing director of the Matsukan Company. Prices are special non-commercial ones and are fixed to only cover costs. However at my suggestion both with various sensei and at the Representatives Meetings, various ideas are now under consideration to assist, perhaps at government level (Nakamura sensei) the export of Kendō goods from Japan in order to develop Kendō abroad. There is also a possibility of a subsidy on such goods.

6. Kokusai Kendō Renmei

Representative meetings were held in Tokyo at the Nippon Budokan under the auspices of the Z.N.K.R. and attended by several of the leading officers of that Renmei including Senator Kimura and Dr. Sasamori. Mr. Ohya Kazuo, Chief Director of the Z.N.K.R. took the chair. Countries represented besides Japan were U.S.A., Brazil, Hawaii, Canada, Australia, Korea, Rep. of China, Okinawa, and Europe.

The formation of the Kokusai Kendō Renmei was unanimously agreed and the Z.N.K.R. (Mr. Ohya) undertook the necessary paperwork and finance involved to put the Renmei in action.

I had the honour to put forward our ideas on the duties of this Renmei which were well received by the delegates, particularly Japan and the U.S.A. Our views on the possibility of an equipment subsidy were found to be particularly interesting.

Representation of the countries was discussed and from the practical point of view I requested Mori Torao Hanshi, the chief-delegate of the U.S.A. to represent our European interests at meetings of the Renmei in Japan. Mori sensei has special knowledge of our situation and speaks excellent English. He readily agreed and this proposal clearly met with the approval of the Z.N.K.R. Naturally we reserve the right to attend ourselves if possible.

7. International Goodwill Tournament - 4th Oct., 1967.

This event was an unqualified success despite the many different nationalities taking part. The very best spirit prevailed throughout and all the matches were, to my mind, fought well and judged fairly. The degree of friendly inter-mixing between the various nationalities was marked, despite language barriers.

At the representatives meeting after the event it was agreed that this event should be a tri-yearly one so the next such tournament will be held in 1970.

(Japan won the team match with the Republic of China (Taiwan) second and the Republic of Korea third.)

8. 3rd International Kendō Tournament - 8th October, 1967.

This, too, was a most friendly affair, helped along no doubt by the prodigious generosity of the International Businessman's Kendō Renmei and the Osaka Kendō Renmei. Again a great success. The Team Match was won by the Republic of Korea with a narrow victory over the Japanese. In the two previous matches the Japanese have won. It is to be emphasized, however, that this was also a goodwill competition.

The next tournament will be held in Korea on 20th April, 1969.

9. Conclusions.

During the whole of this short visit the various sensei most concerned with European Kendō made every effort to secure the interest of every possible master attending these events through my personal introduction and through the medium of T.V. and newspaper coverage. The T.V. interview for N.H.K. on morning of 5th October (Ben Hazard, Mrs. Bodenstein, and myself) was widely seen and most favourably commented upon. Newspaper reports seemed to chiefly concentrate on the non-Japanese Kendōka taking part.

From my own personal Kendō performance in Japan and the criticisms and comments made upon it, I think that Japanese opinion of European Kendō is favourable and that most sensei consider us as 'serious' and therefore deserving of proper help. This is exactly the image that we have been working so hard to achieve over the years. From this acceptance will come increased support and a general strengthening of our official and collective position. The Japanese have a great interest in us as a fully international body in our own right, the first time that they have come across such a thing in Kendō.

Regarding our problems in the political sense, we should take no precipitate action, simply regarding groups who refuse to align themselves to proper Kendō as private organisations without official standing. There is little room for such groups in proper Kendō, of course. But in respect of any action we may consider necessary in the future, we can rest assured that we have the full support of Japan. Our decisions will be recognized and backed.

Lastly, the greatest honour was paid to us when I was asked to make the speech of response on behalf of all the assembled Kendōka to H.E. The Governor of Tokyo, Dr. Minobe Ryukichi, at a reception given for us at the Palace Hotel on the 5th October. In my speech I stressed the importance to the smaller Kendō countries besides the large ones of the new Kokusai Kendō Renmei.

Brighton, 27th October, 1967.