



# *In Memoriam*

**KUROSE Arinobu sensei**  
**Nanadan, kyoshi (1955-2022)**

It is with great sadness that Kurose Arinobu sensei, nanadan kyoshi - has died at the young age of 67 after a private battle with throat cancer. For British Kendo Association players who may remember him – Kurose sensei arrived in South Wales towards the end of the 90s as the then Sony director in a technical capacity for Sony's electronic consumer goods production line. Kurose sensei was part of a tiny, small ex-pat Japanese contingent sent by Sony Corporation for between 1-6 years from Japan.

Kurose sensei initially confined his Kendo practice at Sony in the Bridgend factory with other Japanese Sony colleagues, and Rachel was introduced to him as then a young shodan, living in Cardiff having attended Cardiff University. Kurose sensei wanted to practice Kendo but was nervous to be both teaching and or running a dojo outside Japan, as he felt his "no good English" would hinder him teaching, assessing westerners asked "lots of questions" he wouldn't have the confidence answer. That notwithstanding, Kurose sensei was soon persuaded to lead the first Kendo dojo in Wales, called Akai Ryu (meaning Red Dragon) in Newport, south Wales. Rachel would act as his dojo sempai and interpreter if needed. But Kurose sensei soon found his confidence, and let his Kendo do the talking: and increasingly travelled to support British Kendo events and practices, occasionally travelling with Rachel both to Mumeishi and Wakaba Kendo dojo (latter then based in Chalk Farm) on weekends, to meet other sensei and players to really push his own Kendo development, not least he was spending so much of his effort establishing and raising the level in Wales.

As a young Japanese 7Dan, then only in his mid-40s, with fitness to match and explosive controlled Kendo technique, Kurose sensei was treated with reverence by British Kendo students: for example the motodachi geiko queue to practice with him was generally one of the longest. Kurose sensei also acted as shimpan at numerous Mumeishi 3s taikai. With his support to British Kendo, this effort helped Kurose sensei achieve his Kyoshi while still in the UK. Kurose sensei knew his first name shortened to Ari, sounded like like 'Harry' with the H dropped, so outside the dojo would indicate "Please call me Ari", but few Kendo players did, such was the respect towards Kurose sensei, and his being Japanese. That said possibly only his British 7Dan peers and Rachel were the few that called him "Ari san". For those who remember him, it was Kurose sensei firmly inside and outside the dojo for the majority of the British Kendo family, he had warmed to so well.


Turning back to the Sony corporation, the Japanese HQ had stated its intentions to post Kurose sensei back to a US factory base. He and his family did *not* want that second US posting. Therefore discreetly, Kurose sensei, later did the then unheard of (for a Japanese salary-man in those days), and resigned from Sony to take up the post of the new International Director for the All Japan Kendo Federation (AJKF or ZNKR in Japanese) and the International Kendo Federation (then IKF, now FIK).

By this point Kurose sensei' English was fantastic and Japan felt he had not only the Kendo 7Dan kyoshi gravitas and European Kendo experience, brought his international Sony corporation director-level experience. Kurose sensei said he couldn't believe his luck he was being paid to do Kendo, return

to himself and his young family to his home town of Atami in Shizuoka Prefecture, commute to the AJKF/IKF offices in Kudanshita , Tokyo - and endeavoured to practice Kendo at the Budokan next door to the AJKF offices about twice a week. Kurose sensei also added the Assistant Secretary General, title to his IKF duties.

Kurose sensei in his IKF international director role, never forgot British Kendo players, acting as an impartial cheerleader for British Kendo players and peers he considered Budo friends. He made a point to seek out the British delegation at a World Kendo Championships, which were for him and his team, to deliver in each host country. Kurose sensei took extra special interest wanting to know if anyone was Welsh or from Wales Kendo.

After retiring from the IKF, Kurose sensei stayed in his Atami hometown, and taught Kendo to high school age children, three times a week. Kurose sensei leaves a widow and two adult sons.



The author of this obituary is Rachel HM, Kurose sensei's first dojo sempai and senior ranked student in the Akai Ryuu, south Wales dojo (and currently one of the children's teachers in Wakaba Children's Kendo Dojo, central London). Rachel loyally stayed in touch with Kurose sensei over the past 20+ years. Blessed to travel to Tokyo often for business (and pleasure), always scheduling time-out to meet up with Kurose sensei at the AJKF and IKF offices: by his request if visiting at the end of his working day, enjoying drinks and after-work eats near the Budokan; always taking much missed (by his wife and himself) regular British supermarket favourites as gifts – they particularly missed Typhoo tea and chocolate Hobnobs brands; additionally marking *every* Christmas with cards and a short newsy-note and nonchalant emails throughout the year, touching base. Thus, it was with even greater sadness to re-read Kurose sensei's final email, stating, *"I will see you after the pandemic, when you can return to Japan"*.