

# **2015 Mori-Hai Kendo Tournament**

**February 1, 2015**



**100th Birthday Celebration of Torao Mori Sensei, Hanshi 8 Dan**



*Torao Mori Sensei and Saburo Ogasawara Sensei performing Mohan-jiai demonstration during the Third International Kendo Grand Match at the Nippon Budokan in Tokyo, Japan, October 1967.*

## 2015 Mori-Hai Kendo Tournament

100th Birthday Celebration of Torao Mori Sensei, Hanshi 8 Dan  
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Dee Hardison Sports Center, Wilson Park, Torrance, California  
Sponsored by Southern California Kendo Federation (SCKF)  
Hosted by Torrance Kendo Club

- Master of Ceremonies:** Kevin Abe, SCKF First Vice President
- Playing of the National Anthem**
- Welcome Address:** Jean Kodama, SCKF President
- Introduction of Guests:** Kevin Abe, SCKF First Vice President
- Greetings:** Chris Mori
- Pledge of the Competitors:** Kenichiro Mizobe, Sho-Tokyo Dojo
- Rules and Regulations:** Masashi Shikai, Chief Judge
- Return of Perpetual Trophies:** 2012 Mori-Hai Tournament First Place Winners

- Kata Demonstration:**
  - Yuriko Shikai, Renshi 6 Dan, Chuo Dojo (Uchidachi)
  - Masashi Shikai, Kyoshi 7 Dan, Chuo Dojo (Shidachi)
- Iaido Demonstration:**
  - Levon Sukiassyan, 2 Dan, San Fernando Valley Dojo
  - Narbeh Bagdasarian, 2 Dan, Pasadena Japanese Cultural Institute Dojo
- Naginata Demonstration:**
  - Ruben Ramirez, 2 Dan (Shikake)
  - Shannon Lew, 2 Dan (Oji)
- Isshu-jiai (Naginata vs. Kendo):**
  - Naginata: Shannon Lew, 2 dan
  - Kendo: Sumi Domen, 4 Dan, Norwalk Dojo

- Tournament Rules:**
  - All Kyu Divisions (0-6 Kyu, 5-4 Kyu, 3-1 Kyu, Women’s Kyu, Adult Kyu)
    - Regulation: 3 Minutes; Encho: 2 Minutes; Hantei (except for Semi-Finals and Finals)
  - All Yudansha Divisions (1-2 Dan, 3-4 Dan, 5 Dan and up, Women’s Dan, Seniors)
    - Regulation: 4 Minutes; Encho: 2 Minutes; Hantei (except for Semi-Finals and Finals)

**LUNCH BREAK: TBD**

Dan Divisions:  
1-2 Dan, 3-4 Dan, 5 Dan & above

- Awards Presentation:** Jean Kodama
- Closing Ceremony:** Kevin Abe

*Japan University Kendo Student Delegation Welcome Tournament  
at Koyasan Temple Hall in Little Tokyo, Los Angeles, October  
1955.*





*U.S. team members and delegation to the Third International Kendo Grand Match, led by Torao Mori Sensei, at Los Angeles International Airport, October 1, 1967.*

# Torao Mori

1914~1969

A passion for kendo and fencing made Torao Mori Sensei not only a legendary swordsman, but also the father of modern kendo in the United States. As a champion kendoist, Olympic-caliber fencer/coach, and actor, Mori Sensei promoted kendo in many ways. The Mori-Hai Tournament, held once every three years, honors his dedication, spirit, and love of kendo.

Born in Kiryu, Gumma, Japan as Torao Noma on June 21, 1914, Mori Sensei was brought up with his cousin Hisashi Noma, by his uncle Seiji Noma. Torao was a lineal descendent of Yoozo Mori and his son Torao Mori, both legendary samurai who distinguished themselves in their defense of the Aizu Castle in the 17th Century. Although both cousins were blood descendants of the famous Moris, Torao was especially bestowed with the natural talent for the sword. When Torao became 21, the family decided to officially change his name to Torao Mori in order to carry on his ancestors' legendary name.

Mori Sensei began studying kendo in the second grade and eventually became captain of his school's kendo team. He won the Japan National Kendo Championship while in his teens. At this time he also began studying fencing and concentrated on the sabre due to its similarity to the katana. His dream at that time was to become a member of the Japanese Olympic Fencing Team in the 1940 Olympic Games.

Mori Sensei came to California in 1936 to foster kendo worldwide. Tirelessly promoting kendo, he taught and performed demonstrations all along the West Coast. He studied western fencing under Professor Uttenhove at the Los Angeles Athletic Club. In 1940, Mori Sensei and his bride, Junice Akahoshi, returned to Japan where he was responsible for the adoption of western fencing at Chuo University in Tokyo. The growth of fencing in Japan has spread from this center.

Mori Sensei's dream of participating in the 1940 Olympics was shattered by World War II. Despite the ban on kendo and other martial arts in Japan after the war, Mori Sensei actively pushed to remove the ban. Saying "there is nothing wrong with kendo," Mori Sensei was instrumental in helping lift the ban in Japan.

When Mori Sensei returned to the U.S. in 1949, he met the challenge of reviving kendo in the



U.S. with the same determination. In 1950, he and others established the Kendo Federation of the United States (KFUSA), and later, Nanka Yudansha-Kai, which was renamed the Southern California Kendo Federation (SCKF) in 1959. In 1957, Mori Sensei was awarded the All Japan Kendo Federation's certification of Hanshi, a special title for individuals who have attained the rank of 8 Dan or higher. At the time of his award, Mori Sensei was the youngest person to ever receive this honor.

Mori Sensei competed in fencing for the Los Angeles Athletic Club and won the Pacific Coast sabre title. He later became the fencing coach for the Los Angeles Athletic Club. In 1962, he retired from this position to devote more time to his brokerage firm as well as to the advancement of kendo. Mori Sensei was not only an Olympic official at the Tokyo Olympic Games, he also coached the Japanese Fencing Team at the Rome and Mexico Olympics.

In 1965, Mori Sensei retired from his business and resumed coaching at the invitation of the Los Angeles Fencing Academy. The Mori Fencing Academy was formed in 1967 with the merger of this group and Salle d'Arms Vince when Mori Sensei purchased the Joseph Vince Co. His students won numerous National Championships.

As a technical advisor for films and television, Mori Sensei prepared actors like Peter Ustinov, Claire Bloom, and Rod Steiger for their swashbuckler roles. He appeared on the Johnny Carson Show and worked on films such as House of Bamboo and the Broadway production of Rashomon, as well as the FBI television series.

Mori Sensei loved both kendo and fencing and devoted most of his free time promoting both the martial art and sport. His desire for world peace was shown in the way he lived his daily life.

Mori Sensei passed away on January 8, 1969 while giving kendo instruction at the Gardena Kendo Dojo. The Japanese Government presented the Sacred Treasure Award to Mrs. Mori on behalf of Mori Sensei for his outstanding contribution in promoting goodwill through kendo and fencing. His wife Junice, daughter Jeanie, and son Chris still reside in Southern California.

The Southern California Kendo Federation strives to perpetuate Mori Sensei's legacy and memory with the Mori-Hai Tournament.