

## Characteristics of French Judo

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### French Judo within the International Judo Federation

The International Judo Federation (below, IJF) was established when, in July 1951, Argentina became a member of the European Judo Federation, founded in 1948, and when at this opportunity six other countries, among them England and France, also became members. Japan became a member of the IJF later in December 1952 and at that same time, the director of the Kodokan, Mr. Risei Kano, was appointed the first IJF president. The IJF was born as an international organization comprising nineteen countries from four continents.

At present after more than half a century, the number of member countries and territories is 199. Among these, the country with the largest judo population, as well as being called a global Judo superpower is France. We believe that it is a very important research subject in the middle of this developing and turbulent period of internationalization to collect and analyze information on the popularization policies, strengthening methods, and organizational management of the French Judo Federation (below, FFJDA).

### 1. Teaching Philosophy and the Contributions of Japanese Teachers

As FFJDA's teaching philosophy, judo is spread and developed, while promoting the differences between judo and other sports by stating that judo has educational value and high effectiveness as a sport and by establishing a moral code (see below) that is mainly aimed at young people. A policy to inherit traditional Japanese culture has been picked up by drawing on the following terms adopted from Inazo Nitobe's Bushido: 'Etiquette', 'Humility', 'Respect', 'Sincerity', 'Courage', 'Self-Control', 'Friendship' and 'Honor', that are seen as Japanese virtues, and by placing these terms in the dojo's written both in Japanese characters and in French. Furthermore, on the certificates and diplomas the FFJDA hands out a picture of Jigoro Kano wearing a kimono, and the expressions that incorporate the philosophy of judo, '精力善用' ('Seiryoku Zenyo') and '自他融和共栄' ('Jita Yuwa Kyoei'), are printed. In the front area of many judo dojo's, that exist in France, this picture and these two expressions are displayed, and upon entering and leaving the dojo the students are instructed to bow toward them. On the poster entitled 'dos and don'ts for competitors' aimed at children that was sent to all clubs in September 2008, six terms concerning etiquette are mentioned (extract, 'When being weighed, pay your respect to the person in charge', 'Show respect to your opponent by bowing properly', 'Bow properly after each match without regard to the result'. (graph 1)

To each registered member of the FFJDA, an athlete registration card (judo passport) is issued. In order to elevate humanity, an important teaching measure is implemented for passports of young people where a famous cartoon character (Waza-arix) is used, and when the teacher has evaluated a student to a behavioral level according to one of the previous terms, a colored sticker saying 'well done!' is given to the student, which can be attached inside or on the passport. Such measures cultivate morality, make one's interests alert, and allow for endurance.

One should not forget that the background to France's development into a judo superpower were the Japanese judoka who contributed enormously and at great cost.

Representative among these was Mikinosuke Kawaishi (1899-1969). The teaching method that Kawaishi, who came to France in 1935, introduced, method K (K for Kawaishi), is at present still applied during rank promotion tests and in basic teaching textbooks. Kawaishi is called ‘the father of French judo’ and he is the person who has built the basis for French judo.

In 1950, Seizo Awazu (9th Dan, born in 1923) came to France at the personal invitation of Kawaishi. Mr. Awazu became involved in FFJDA coaching in 1957, after which he served, among others, as the French judo team coach at the 1964 Tokyo Olympics. At present, he is still active as a representative French teacher. Mr. Awazu’s greatness can be perceived by the fact that, at the INJ (Institut National du Judo), which could be seen as the French Kodokan, there is a dojo that has Mr. Awazu’s name, Awazu dojo and that there is also an Awazu dojo inside Paris’ famous sports club, Racing Club .

At present still, he is a symbolic presence within the French judo world, and as a huge judoka, he is honored and trusted as well as loved by many French judoka. It is no overstatement to say that without Awazu’s presence as the successor to Kawaishi, who built the basis, French judo wouldn’t have flourished. In 1999, Mr. Awazu’s accomplishments were recognized by the French government in that he was presented with the Legion d’Honneur (Chevalier).

## 2. The Athlete Strengthening System

In France, sports strengthening is carried out on a national level. Many French national team athletes of the Olympic sports are invited to gather and train at the equipped environment of INSEP (Institut National du Sport et de l’Education Physique). INSEP, generally being called the ‘champion factory’, dominates the top of French sports as the most important strengthening center.

In 2006, modeling INSEP, the FFJDA established its own judo dojo the INJ (Institut National du Judo). And under the wings of the INJ, INEF (Institut National d’Entrainement et de Formation) was established as a national strengthening center for sub-top level athletes. Furthermore, in each region strengthening centers have been established by age group, meant to function as power centering structures.

These regional strengthening centers, called ‘Pôle France’, ‘Pôle Espoire’ and ‘Classe Departementale’, are aimed at young athletes. The basis for this athlete strengthening system is formed by the approximately 5500 registered judo clubs in each village, town, city and province of France. The French athlete strengthening system has been built as a partitioned structure in the shape of a pyramid consisting of six layers. (graph 2, table 1)

## 3. The Teacher Qualification System

As a characteristic case of the FFJDA that does not exist in our country, we can mention the unique French Teacher Qualification Authorization System and the Authorization Exam. In France, one takes a national exam for what is called a Brevet d’Eta (BEES), and teaching judo is legally prohibited to those who have not obtained this diploma.

In 1955 a law was adopted that made it mandatory for judo teachers to have obtained a national qualification. Afterwards, in 1972, this national qualification was revised and specified it into three levels (table 2).

## 4. In Conclusion

The judo population, results at international tournaments, FFJDA’s activities, and the rapid progress in

management and teaching policy are developments that are also very inspirational for Japan as the country where judo originated. Then, as can be seen from the accomplishments of many pioneers who have spread Japanese judo around the world, a very important issue is the cultivation of successors who are internationally equipped and respected by judoka around the world.

One element of French judo development is the ability to accurately grasp the way time flows, a flexible way of thinking, to be able to react to the swift development and implementation of occasional measures.

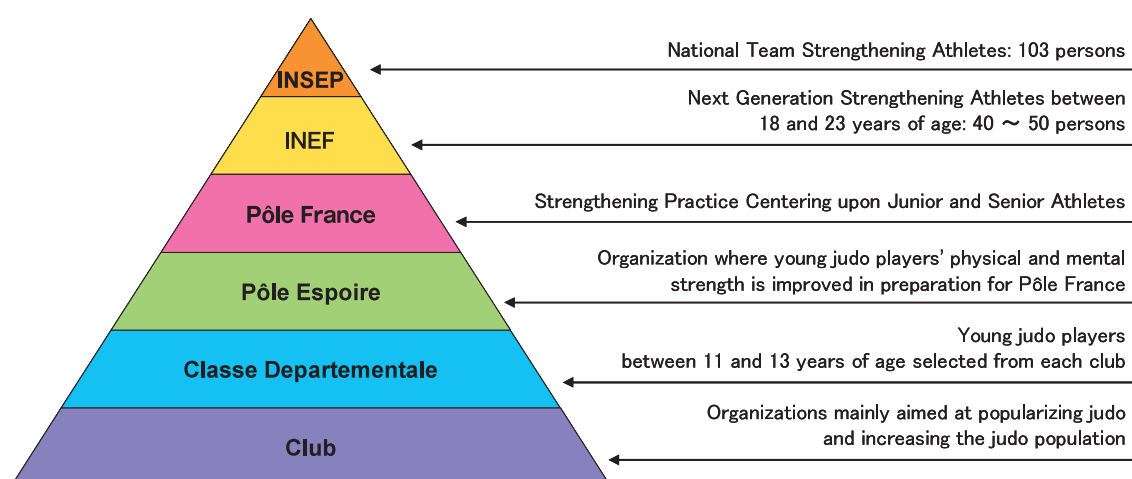
The role we Japanese as founders of judo play in a judo world that doesn't seem to be able to stop changing, in this era where the speed of globalization is increasing, is still important. The role and job we perform as world leaders contributes to international service. Then again, we interpret the research of French judo as meaningful, not only for searching the direction in which Japanese judo is developing, but also for teachers involved in judo.



Graph 1. FFJDA poster on attitude meant for children and young adults

Table 1. The French Athlete Strengthening System : Age Groups and Number of Facilities

Strengthening Organization	Age Group	Number of Facilities (within France)
INSEP	No age limitation	1
INEF	From 18 until 23 years of age	1
Pôle France	Above 17 years of age	4
Pôle Espoire	From 13 until 16 years of age	26
Classe Departementale	From 11 until 13 years of age	40
Club	No age limitation	5500



Graph 2. The French Athlete Strengthening System

Table 2. FFJDA's Teacher Qualification System: National Qualification Brevet d'Eta

Brevet d'Eta	Qualification for Examination	Activities by Qualified Teachers
BEES Level 1	Over 18 years old and in possession of the 2nd dan judo or higher	Education, Organization (Formation) Basic strength training, management of sports activities Teaching judo in respective counties and clubs
BEES Level 2	More than 2 years in possession of BEES level 1, and 3rd dan judo or higher	Management of technical improvement Planning and implementation of instruction and practice Teaching at regional, interregional as well as national level
BEES Level 3	More than 4 years in possession of BEES level 2	Judging and gathering information (research) Teaching at national and international level

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