

ESSAY FOR THE GRADE OF HACHIDAN

TEACHING JUDO TACTICS

BY MICHEL BROUSSE



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Pierre Brousse

2.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly, I would like to pay tribute to my father, Pierre Brousse, 7th dan, international referee, and pioneer of judo in Toulouse, who passed on his knowledge and passion to me. This last remark is not intended to give the presentation a nostalgic and sad tone. It is a pleasure and a source of pride for me to acknowledge this connection.

I would like to pay tribute to my wife, who has been by my side for many years and whose seemingly naive remarks have always proved to be highly relevant. Without her constant and unconditional support, none of this would have been possible. This rank owes her a great deal.

I would also like to mention all those who have directly or indirectly influenced my practice and my understanding of judo in general. I would like to mention my teachers, my elders, and experts. Sometimes we just spent time together, sometimes they accompanied me and showed me the way. All of them have left a lasting impression on me beyond our encounters. Their names are: Hak-Lae Lee, Denis Pylypiw, Shozo Awazu, Yutaka Yasumoto, Ryosaku Hirano, Peter Herrmann, François Besson, Haku Michigami, André Ertel, Anton Geesink, Jean Gailhat, Henri Courtine, Naoki Murata, and Yasuhiro Yamashita.

I learned a lot from my training partners, whether at INSEP or Meiji, Tenri, and Tokai, and even more from my opponents, French of course, but also foreign. I will mention only the most renowned among them, who, sometimes in victory but more often in defeat, pushed me to exceed my limits and reflect on my weaknesses.

On the one hand, there are Jerzy Jatowtt, Zbigniew Bielawski, Dietmar Lorenz, Keith Remfry, Ramaz Kharshiladze, and, on the other, David Starbrook, Angelo Parisi, Jean-Luc Rougé, Walter Carmona, and Tengiz Khubuluri. These moments of great intensity and rich emotion have given me a rare experience.

Combined with my academic background, these encounters with such varied styles have inspired me to develop a vision of judo, its teaching, and learning based on an approach that attempts to combine experience forged by empiricism and pragmatism with reflection nourished by current scientific hypotheses.

I cannot forget my friends. We have known each other for a long time and regularly share commonalities, questions, and differences. They live in Bordeaux, Paris, Lyon, Montauban, Marseille, Clermont-Ferrand, Barcelona, Lausanne, San Francisco, Tsukuba, Tokyo, Kyoto... and elsewhere, but distance matters little given the strength and intensity of the friendship and passion that unite us.

These acknowledgements would be incomplete if I did not express my utmost respect and friendship to Jean-Luc Rougé, my sponsor for the awarding of this very high rank. We have travelled together on several occasions, and I am very grateful to him, as his presence honors me greatly.

Bordeaux, July 2025.



Michel Brousse



Naples, 1971
Junior European championships final
against Ramaz Kharshiladze

3.

INTRODUCTION

The study presented here raises the fundamental question of teaching fighting skills in judo and the apparent dichotomy that exists between technique and tactics. What view do teachers have of tactics in judo? How is this knowledge transmitted to judokas throughout their learning process? What models does the federal institution propose and why?

To give meaning to the theme chosen for this contribution, I will quickly recall my particular journey and highlight the importance of a personal trajectory by recalling the successive stages that characterize my evolution and underpin this choice. The demonstration that follows is organized in two parts. The first part examines a century of judo teaching in France, starting from 1925, the date of the first available archive relating to a judo course in Paris. The historical perspective highlights the relationships between eras, conceptions, and trends. It reveals the drivers of evolution and places the role of individuals within the general framework of cultural, economic, and political influences. It provides a framework without which the analysis would be merely descriptive. The second part is the study itself. The teaching contents are examined in detail from the point of view of the relationship between technique and tactics in the official methods that have succeeded each other.

The oral transmission that dominates in judo is both a strength and a weakness. The sources used aim to fill this deficit. I have not hesitated to draw on significant publications, which are true manuscript legacies of experienced teachers. At the international level, Japan has long been considered the fundamental reference, but Japanese judo is far from offering the unity of conception that is attributed to it from abroad. A careful look does not ignore the differences in trends. France is also a model that is envied, copied, and adopted by many countries, to the point that some now publish alternative proposals. Like France, which has managed to emancipate itself from Japan, some nations are asserting themselves by producing their own pedagogical approaches. The object of this contribution is also to identify and confront the different existing proposals.

The theme chosen for this contribution to the 8th dan grade is at the crossroads of experiences acquired in distinct areas as a simple practitioner, then competitor, teacher-researcher, and leader. I will begin with a quick presentation of this personal trajectory and these multiple experiences, carried out in historically marked but also culturally very different contexts. They have strongly influenced my view of the discipline and its teaching.

I have had a long-standing relationship with judo. I wore my first judogi in May 1959, in Toulouse. Rich in the teaching and conception of judo transmitted by my father, I had access to the culture of the generation of pioneers of French judo. In the 1960s, the life of a practitioner was marked only by the passage of grades, the expected visits of a Japanese expert, or the first summer training camps. The spirit of competition was certainly present, but competitions only sublimated a few times a year the intensity of passions and regional rivalries. Victory was only appreciated in the beauty of the gesture and the nobility of behavior. Physical confrontation was meant to reveal self-overcoming. In this very Coubertinian conception of sporting effort, the master appeared as the guide who forges minds before instructing bodies. The judo I



January 1969, Tournament in Schwerin, DDR, with P. Barraco, A. Chaudeseigne, S. Culioli, J-C. Massi

practiced reflected the characteristics of its time. I had a “special”, *uchi mata* in this case, and an effective *kumi kata*.¹ Everything was played out in terms of movements and reactions to find the right opportunity. The objective was simple and direct: win by *ippon*! The dominant offensive attitude at that time was modeled on the Japanese style that champions like Inokuma or Okano, then Sasahara or Fujii, illustrated in the most beautiful way, just like Jean-Claude Brondani or Guy Auffray in France.

The teaching of judo was encyclopedic. Having preferences did not exclude knowledge of a wide range of movements. Not liking *ne waza* did not mean ignoring its principles and subtleties. *Randori*, a privileged time for experiences, made sense. In the vast majority of clubs, the teaching of technical

knowledge was organized in a sequential, algorithmic way. Static form was added to opportunities, defenses, combinations, counter-attacks, and ground work. This broad knowledge made the reputation of many French champions, appreciated as much for their effectiveness as for their style and elegance on the *tatami*. The generalized sports orientation and the multiplication of stakes following the inclusion of judo in the Olympic program have modified this exhaustive conception of knowledge. The range has narrowed, favoring the study of confrontation situations and the exploitation of constantly renewed arbitration rules. Hybridized by the style

of folkloric wrestling, the way competitors fight, increasingly subject to the demands of professional sport, has profoundly influenced the teaching of judo, to the point of questioning the fundamental principles of learning.

Due to rapid sporting success, I was very quickly opposed to fighters who were little influenced by the Japanese style, particularly those representing the USSR and Eastern European countries. The difference in technical knowledge certainly gave an advantage. But this was often reduced by opponents with maximum physical condition and very judicious and optimized management of arbitration rules. The gap between a technical classicism seeking *ippon* and a vision mainly guided by obtaining results forced me to rapid adaptation.

Once my sporting career was over, this questioning did not lose its relevance. Appointed as coach of the Sports Studies section of Michelet, a high school in Vanves near Paris, I had to



January 1969, Tournament in Schwerin, DDR

¹ As I write these lines, I remember. It was undoubtedly to compensate for the fact that, as the young cadet I was, I had poor defence against his *ko uchi gari* that Denis Pylypiw, who weighed only 63 kg but was the French senior champion and European medallist in his category, told me that I did not know how to hold the judogi; ‘he was going to show me’. After several days, following numerous *randori* (and numerous *ko uchi gari*), I suddenly felt that I had finally achieved a good control. We looked at each other, he smiled and said, ‘That’s it, you’ve got it. You’ve got it.’ He stepped back, bowed... and never wanted to do *randori* with me again! That day, I reached a milestone in terms of effectiveness. I gained precious time. Today, I tell myself that if I hadn’t met ‘Pilou’ during my first training camp at INSEP, without his advice and immediate friendliness, my career might have been different. A method, even an official one, will never replace this type of privileged transmission, but it can lay the solid foundations that lead young practitioners in the direction of progress more quickly.

INTRODUCTION

immediately focus on achieving sporting results. I endeavored to reach these objectives while preserving the balance between competition and education.² For family reasons, at the end of this very rich human and sporting experience in Paris, I took up a position as a teacher at the Faculty of Sports Science and Physical Education in Bordeaux.

In my university position, I was able to pursue my studies and research on judo in the broad sense. I successively obtained the Brevet d'État 3rd degree, then the agrégation in physical education and sports, and a doctorate in STAPS (Sciences of Sports). This led me to participate in conferences, write articles for peer-reviewed journals, give lectures, and deepen my reflections in an academic framework. I focused my work on the history of judo, without abandoning reflection on its teaching.

Thanks to my sporting past and the excellent relationships I maintained with the federal circle, particularly with François Besson, I was repeatedly solicited as a former competitor in the context of international exchanges organized under the aegis of the International Judo Federation and Olympic Solidarity. From the early 1980s, I first conducted training sessions for national teams, then, aware of the evolution of competitive judo, for teachers in both practical and theoretical ways. I often intervened repeatedly in Iceland, Denmark, Venezuela, Portugal, Spain, Norway, the United States, Brazil, England, Croatia, and Japan.

My involvement, for about ten years, in the International Federation as research director and then media director and spokesperson for President Y.S. Park allowed me to apprehend in a different way the diversity of world judo. Close to Yasuhiro Yamashita, I was solicited when, as director of education at the IJF, he commissioned a pedagogical document *Coaching Judo for Juniors*, widely distributed around the world. This DVD, translated into 5 languages (English, French, Spanish, Japanese, Arabic), details the earning of judo for young beginners. Alongside Peter Gardiner (Scotland) and Franco Capelletti (Italy), I presented pedagogical situations that illustrate the pedagogical advances at work in judo teaching in France.³

Without ever moving away from the *tatami*, I held several leadership positions during which I was able to appreciate the nature of the means necessary to make an institution evolve. In the context of the responsibilities I had to fulfill within the IJF and then the FFJDA, as in the drafting of this text, my choices were always dictated by a policy turned towards modernity but respectful of traditions.

This biographical overview evokes the slow construction of a conception linking science and empiricism. The chosen theme favors efficiency but preserves a place for the cultural and educational dimension. The deliberate academic character of this contribution is implicitly dictated by the obligation of transmission that falls to me, as to all high-ranking holders. First comes the function I currently fulfill as secretary of the French Academy of Judo. The main mission of this venerable institution is to preserve and transmit the heritage of judo to new generations. I could not escape it. The same duty results from the decoration awarded to me by the Japanese government. In November 2016, I received the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Rosette, due to the "contribution of my academic work to exchanges in the world of sport through judo and to the mutual understanding between Japan and France."⁴ To be worthy of this distinction implies continuing on the chosen path.

² These few years spent at Michelet High School have taught me a great deal. I have greatly enjoyed supporting and following the sporting achievements of Jean-Raymond Marquez, Jean-Daniel Delrieux, Pascal Bozo, Nasser Néchar, Bertrand Amoussou, Pascal Tayot and Christophe Gagliano.

³ Michel Brousse, *Coaching judo to Juniors, [L'enseignement du judo aux enfants]*, Presented by Yasuhiro Yamashita, Director of Education of the International Judo Federation, Fighting Films, The IJF Coaching Series, Bristol, United Kingdom, DVD Pal et NTSC, 5 languages: French, English, Spanish, Japanese, Arabic, 85 min, 2006.

⁴ <https://www.mofa.go.jp/files/000200245.pdf>

ESSAY FOR THE GRADE OF HACHIDAN

Finally, the desire to leave a written, documented, and argued trace is part of the will to show that judo is not limited to a simple combat activity. Its purposes, displayed in the form of maxims in all dojos around the world, advocate mutual aid and prosperity. However, the systematic reference to classical technical knowledge and predefined *kata* forms, as they were established 130 years ago, creates major gaps that tend to demotivate today's practitioners. The number of candidates for the first *dan* exams has dropped significantly. Too sporting, judo can only interest those who have the physical means to devote themselves to it over time. Continuing the founder's work is certainly launching a collective reflection to update practices by rethinking the activity and its teaching. A careful look at the history of judo teaching in France allows us to better understand and react to current challenges.

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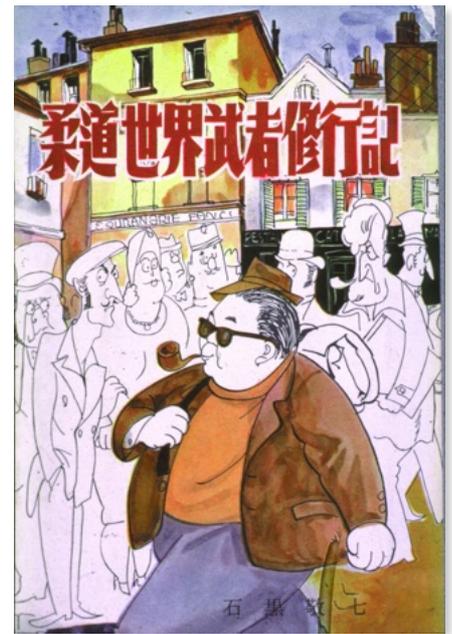
A CENTURY OF JUDO TEACHING IN FRANCE (1925-2025)

In his memoirs, the famous judoka, journalist, and writer Keishichi Ishiguro recounts his misfortune as a teacher during his attempt to introduce judo to Paris in 1925.⁵ The testimony of Bernard Lerolle, who was his student, is to date the oldest archive relating to teaching in France. It is quoted in Jean-Philippe Damié's book, *Le palmarès du judo français (The French Judo Rankings)*: "There were about thirty students practicing this new sport. However, each class only had four or five participants. Their average age was 30. Master Ishiguro's classes were informal. At the beginning of the session, we would warm up, then learn a few standing holds, and finish with ground holds. Sometimes we would end with *randori*."

Maurice Cottureau, who was awarded a black belt by Mikinosuke Kawaishi in 1939, also remembers his classes at the Franco-Japanese club: "The training was based on repetition, studying movements and soft *randori*. Master Kawaishi taught a new technique in each lesson and marked the movements he had chosen with a cross in a large book that he used as a teaching manual. There was no precise nomenclature at the beginning, and we had to remember how to execute each throw as it had been demonstrated."»⁶

Thus, the emergence of what is known as the 'Kawaishi Method' came later. It was the result of contacts that the expert made after his arrival in France. Henri Birnbaum confirms this: 'It is obvious, even to me, that his method was developed between 1937 and 1941/1943 and that, in the meantime, he taught without any definitive method.'⁷

It all began with an initiative by the Japanese ambassador to Paris, Yotaro Sugimura, who put the Japanese expert in touch with Moshe Feldenkrais. Feldenkrais, who had initially studied at the École Spéciale des Travaux Publics de la Ville de Paris (Paris Special School of Public Works), went on to work with Paul Langevin and Frédéric Joliot at the Radium Institute. He is the true founder of judo in France.⁸ He recounts his many exchanges with Kawaishi. He reports on their joint book project and the two years of research and collaboration that led to a new way of presenting teaching. The documents and a series of 600 photographs



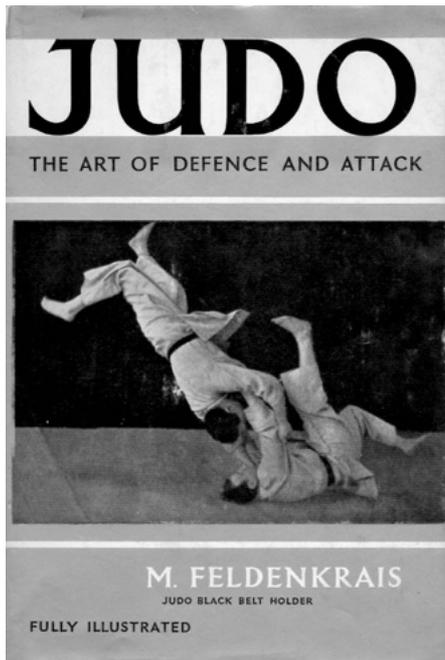
The Samurai Judoka Around the World

⁵ Keishichi Ishiguro, *Judo sekai musha shugyoki [The samurai Judoka around the World]*, Tokyo, Kawazu Shoten, 1953, 206 p.

⁶ Philippe Damié, directed by Jean Donzel, *Le palmarès du judo français*, Choisy-le-Roi, C.E.S., 1990, p. 46.

⁷ Henri Birnbaum was one of Mikinosuke Kawaishi's first students. Correspondence, January 12, 2000

⁸ For more details see, Michel Brousse, *Les racines du judo français. Histoire d'une culture sportive*, Presses Universitaires de Bordeaux, 2005, 367 p.



Judo, the Art of Defence and Attack,

attesting to their collaboration have stood the test of time. They are in the possession of Moti Nativ, an Israeli researcher specializing in martial arts. In *Judo, the Art of Defence and Attack*, Moshe Feldenkrais states:

My publishers' suggestion decided Professor Mikonosuke Kawaishi (fifth Dan) and myself to materialize the work we planned long ago. We spent almost two years preparing the photographs, and had the satisfaction of obtaining some illustrations showing both of us in action which I am not afraid to call unique.

We have covered the entire field of Judo, including counters, combinations, and all the Katas. We have also added the best and most ingenious tricks of ancient Ju-Jitsu; special attention has been devoted to self-defence tricks as taught in Dojo and to their application in real fighting with and without weapons.

The occupation of Paris unfortunately brought to an abrupt end our long and instructive collaboration since I founded the Jiu-Jitsu Club de France. Now I have written this first book single-handed. Most of the illustrations, however, are made from photographs where the incomparable skill and grace of Mr. M. Kawaishi are to be seen.⁹

The 'Kawaishi method' forms a whole. It comprises 147 techniques. First and foremost, it is characterized by the combination of teaching content and a hierarchy of grades represented by colored belts already in use in Great Britain. The classification it proposes is a very effective 'ready-to-teach' system for both teachers and students. However, the 'Kawaishi method' is not limited to its technical or pedagogical dimensions. It is also, and perhaps above all, a particular way of considering judo as the expression of a martial culture that imposes itself on its practitioners, dictating their attitudes and behaviour.



Graphic research board by Jean Gailhat

In the 'Kawaishi method' as formulated, the numbering of holds is preferred to the descriptive or pictorial names used in Japan. Compared to the *gokyo* of the 'Kano method', which Kawaishi studied during his apprenticeship, the order chosen also differs in that it includes a greater number of techniques and a slightly different grouping method. This makes it easier to identify the field of knowledge and simplifies the memorization process. In turn, the physicist influenced the practitioner.

It was not until 1951 that a publication that could be described as official, *Ma Méthode de Judo* by Maître Kawaishi, precisely defined the definitive technical content of the method and completed the work begun in Feldenkrais's time. In fact, the work owes much to the final form given to it by Jean Gailhat, author of the texts and drawings.

⁹ Feldenkrais Moshe, *Judo, the Art of Defence and Attack*, London, Frederick Warne and Co. Ltd, 1944 (1938), pp. 5-6.

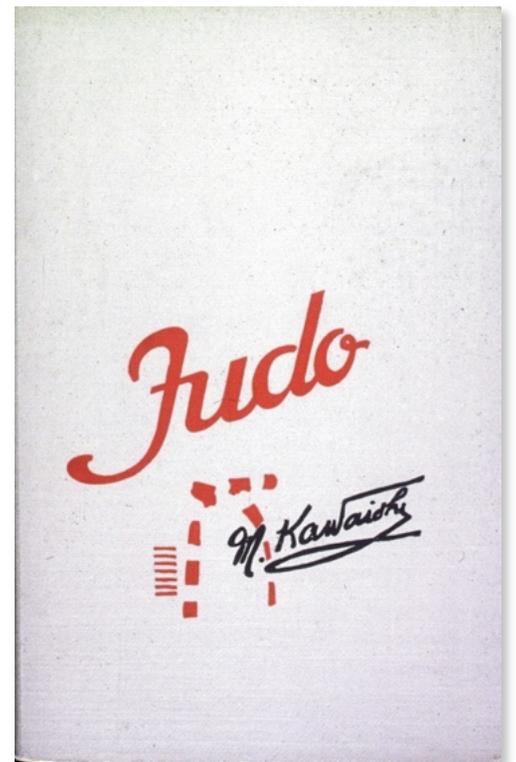
Kawaishi's assistant and secretary general of the FFJJ, Jean Gailhat, was a doctor of law and a graduate of the *École des Hautes Études Commerciales de Paris* (HEC). Like Paul Bonét-Maury, he put his passion, his sense of logic, and his organizational skills at the service of judo and the federal cause. In writing this text, Jean Gailhat formalized the method and gave it the concrete existence that it had previously lacked. *Ma Méthode de Judo* became an indispensable reference for teaching and grading. A Westernized form of the Japanese art, it was widely disseminated in Europe, but also on the African and American continents.

The Westernization of Kano's method can also be seen in a particular conception of technical movement. Kawaishi's judo is a rather static form of judo in which muscular action is valued over sensation. 'Put your leg in and push hard!' the Master would say to hesitant students. In his teaching, Kawaishi retained some of the movements inspired by combat jujutsu that did not feature, or no longer featured, in Kano's judo (neck locks, leg locks, 11th hold on, etc.).

Norikazu Kawaishi shares his perspective on his father's method.

Everything needs to be rethought. Why should judo, a universal principle as defined by Kano, be reserved for an elite group (gifted students)? Why shouldn't the average person with very average abilities be able to enjoy the benefits of this discipline? Why should judo be taught to Westerners with long, fragile legs that are prone to clumsy footing and therefore accidents? [...] My father's answers gave rise to the judo we know today. Even if a student is mediocre, they are entitled to quality teaching and a method adapted to their abilities. If Westerners have fragile lower limbs, they should start with a static study of the techniques. Practicing leg scissors or leg locks can strengthen them. If the legs are long and less solid than those of the Japanese, the techniques must be adapted. [...] He wanted his method to be different from the Kodokan's gokyo (much poorer technically), which favours pulling judo (hiki no judo) and begins with ashi barai. He emphasizes pushing judo (oshi no judo), favoring rear techniques and ne waza.¹⁰

This argument is put forward by a skilled technician, a 7th dan in judo, but certain signs of subjectivity and a tendency towards retrospective justification cannot be ignored. However, beyond the divergence of views on the causes of technical adaptation and the relevance of the arguments, it is important to bear in mind the weight of cultural influence. The judo proposed by Kawaishi is defined as being adapted for the Western world.¹¹ Thus, the form of techniques seems to be dictated by the function assigned to them. This observation is consistent with the principles of functional aesthetics developed by André Leroi-Gourhan in his studies on



Kawaishi, *Ma Méthode de judo*.
Textes et dessins de Jean Gailhat

¹⁰ Norikazu Kawaishi « Mikinosuke Kawaishi shi-han 10^{ème} dan », *Bulletin n° 43 de l'Académie de Judo Michigami*, [mai 1999], s.p.

¹¹ I do not accept the irrelevant morphological argument, which is based on stereotypes. While there may have been a noticeable age difference between the Japanese students of the time and the French judokas in their forties who were in the majority in the 1940s and 1950s, this very temporary gap was quickly closed.

the function and form of tools.¹² As with the knives and swords studied by the palaeontologist, judo movements have a function to fulfill in which their usefulness is determined by the cultural and social context. The author of *Gesture and Speech* states: "*The function reappears here, but more clearly, as a simple physical formula, abstract and devoid of any aesthetic basis other than that which stems from the harmony of equations.*" If the "Kawaishi method" attaches great importance to the self-defence techniques that the expert taught extensively during his travels outside Japan, the main reason lies in the interest that members have in a Japanese martial art that promises invincibility.

The art of projection respects the framework defined by anatomy and mechanics but adapts its form to the intentions of those who practice it. In what Kawaishi's students do, the form of the technical movement is as much about what it represents virtually as what it allows in practice. The objective lies as much, and sometimes more, in its symbolism as in its execution in a competitive situation. At that time, judo was practiced with others rather than against them. It would be futile to try to compare the skills of successive generations, but in the context of the 1950s, competition still played a minor role and judo techniques were applied in the context of a fictional confrontation, both reconstructed and ritualized, where codes were as important as actions. Judo and its techniques gave a spiritual dimension to performance.

¹² André Leroi-Gourhan, *Le geste et la parole, La mémoire et les rythmes*, Paris, Albin Michel, 1965, pp. 120-137.

4.1

FROM THE “WAR OF METHODS” TO THE UNIFICATION OF JUDO TEACHING

Ichiro Abe's arrival in Toulouse took place against a backdrop of political opposition. The Shudokan was founded in January 1950 by Georges and Robert Lasserre. The club was affiliated with the Budokwai in London and published its own magazine. The Lasserre brothers believed that judo should serve to advance humanity far beyond any individual or organizational strategy. In one of his letters to President Paul Bonét-Maury, Robert Lasserre stated: *'Judo is a great thing because it breaks down barriers and touches us all. It is universal, and it is this feeling of universality that must permeate us. There are no different races, different colors, different classes, there are men, brothers, pilgrims on the road to human progress. We must reach out in all sincerity and simplicity. That is how we will become better people.'* Robert Lasserre continues: *'No one can consider a country as their fiefdom, especially when it comes to judo, which is closely linked to the fields of education and human culture. [...] Judo cannot be imprisoned in any uniform, whether national, racial, financial, sectarian or personal.'*¹³



Shudokan Magazine

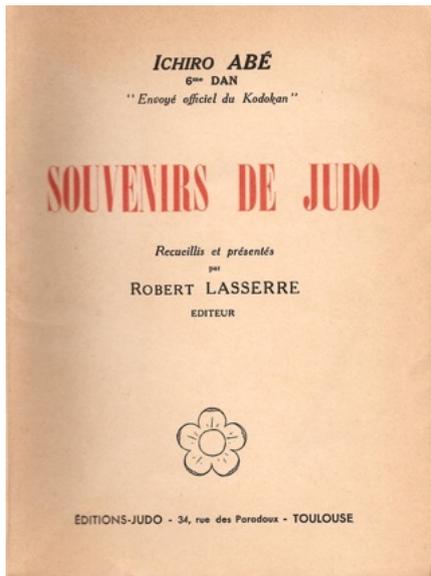
National leaders have a policy that is hostile to initiatives outside the system defined by Kawaishi, but this does not take into account the determination of Shudokan officials. Their determination is all the greater because they give themselves the means to achieve their ambitions. With the help of sponsors, they create scholarships for Japanese students. Ichiro Abe is one of them. A sixth dan and brilliant technician, he won over judoka in the Toulouse region and then Parisian teachers who regularly travelled to Occitanie and quickly became enthusiastic students.

At the most obvious level, that of practice, the difference in approach translates into a profound change in individuals' relationship with their discipline. The choice of the Kodokan 'method' represents a desire to 're-orientalize' judo, a return to its roots that is considered essential. For Abe, self-defence, the basis of the discipline, is nothing more than a trivial game. His criticism is not veiled. *'One can believe in the presumption and vanity of those who work solely to become invincible.'*¹⁴

The 'Kawaishi method' is an effort at rationalisation. However, its implementation, which was too rigid, did not keep pace with changing attitudes. The judo demonstrated by Abe is a flexible and airy style that emphasizes movement and frees the body. The dynamism of the forms, the creation and exploitation of imbalance, and the search for sensations break with the static work taught until then, which only exceptional judoka were able to overcome.

¹³ Letter sent by Robert Lasserre à la FFJJJ, June 1950.

¹⁴ Abe Ichiro, *Judo*, Paris, Chiron, 1964, p. 201.



Souvenirs de judo par Ichiro Abe

Judo renews its motor skills. Physical and spiritual exercise becomes an intellectual and physical game, and confrontation becomes a visual pleasure. *Gokyo no waza* is the official teaching programme of the 'Kodokan method'. Learning begins with *de ashi barai*, a forward foot sweep. Kano justified this choice: *'The body must move with flexibility and precision, anticipating the opponent's movements. Muscular strength plays only a secondary role and must be controlled to be effective. The sliding fall is safe and gives beginners confidence.'* The aesthetics of Kodokan judo were not without criticism, particularly from certain experts trained in Busen, who did not hesitate to describe Abe as a 'ballet dancer'.

Some teachers, protesting behind the scenes, see Abe's success as an opportunity to oppose the federal leadership. They display their allegiance to Kodokan in order to denounce the authoritarianism and pyramid system put in place by Kawaishi and relayed by Bonét-Maury and his group. For them, it is also an opportunity to attain a rank that would otherwise be denied them. The seditious move that led to the

creation of a dissident federation, the Union Fédérale Française d'Amateurs du Judo Kodokan, on 8 October 1954 marked the high point of what has come to be known as the 'war of methods'.

4.2

A "FRENCH" METHOD

Under the chairmanship of President Claude Collard, 25 of France's leading experts were brought together to form a 'national teaching commission', which later became the 'Federal Teaching Council'. These teachers were tasked with developing a teaching programme for French judo. In 1966, the first 'French method' was published as *Les Cahiers techniques et pédagogiques (Technical and Educational Notebooks)*, a supplement to the federal Judo Magazine. In the preface, Georges Pfeifer, President of the FFJDA, stated: *'The introduction of diplomas and state certificates, and preparation for exams, mean that federal teaching must be unified. That is the purpose of these Technical and Educational Notebooks.'*¹⁵

The new 'method' is a synthesis of the Kawaishi and Kodokan systems. It preserves continuity but displays its own specific characteristics. It thus breaks with its history and asserts its autonomy from Japan. Characteristically, the first technical move taught to beginners is *o goshi*, a change that demonstrates, if proof

¹⁵ FFJDA, « Les cahiers techniques et pédagogiques, supplément à « Judo », *Revue officielle*, FFJDA, s.d. [1966], s.l., s.p.

were needed, the desire for renewal and independence. A systematic study plan for standing techniques is defined. It includes the name, in French and Japanese, general information, and an overall explanation of the technique. This is followed by the essential points, mistakes to avoid, different opportunities, escapes and defenses, combinations, counter-moves, and the standing-ground connection. Specific exercises are added to this formal set. A similar outline is presented for *ne waza* techniques.

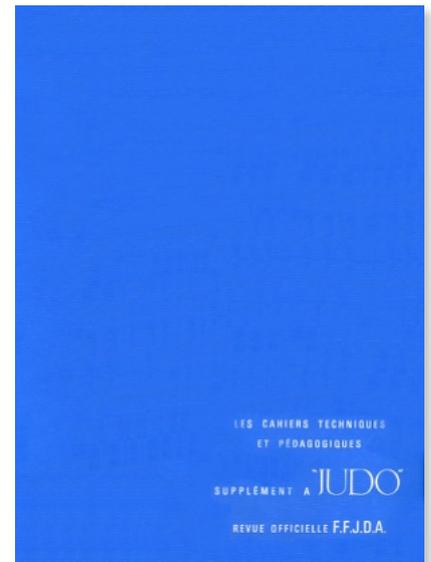
The organizational logic remains the same. Knowledge is divided according to rank. Each belt color corresponds to a range of techniques. The system is simple. It retains the same appeal for both students and teachers. It is very effective for adults and teenagers who want to progress through the ranks.

From the 1940s to the early 1970s, whether sought after or rejected, the philosophical dimension dominated judo teaching to such an extent that it became a focus of interest accepted, willingly or unwillingly, by all practitioners. This approach to learning gave judo a formative and educational mission. As for measuring progress, it mainly referred to each individual's level rather than a sporting assessment reflected in a hierarchy of titles and medals. From then on, learning could only be conceived in reference to an ideal of mastery, even if it was theoretical.

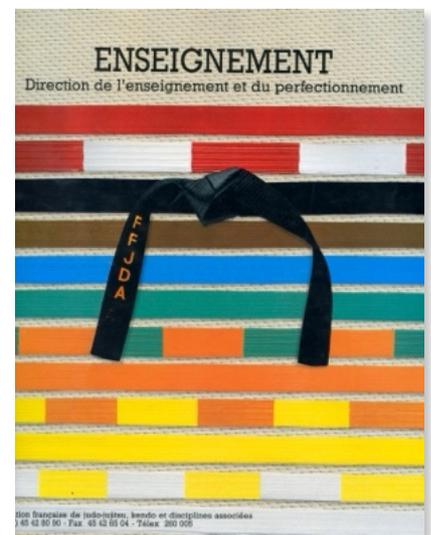
In the mid-1970s, the dual upheaval of the sporting orientation on the one hand and the rejuvenation of practitioners on the other greatly disrupted teachers who were ill-prepared for such a significant change. Many found themselves ill-equipped to face the new challenges. With pupils becoming younger and younger, their initial training did not enable them to integrate the advances in human sciences and teaching methods that were becoming essential in motor skills learning, or to offer training systems other than those based on the physical preparation model found in athletics and weight training manuals.

It was not until the mid-1980s that the model reached its limits, as many teachers were unable to adapt their teaching methods to the new student population. The French Judo Federation, under the leadership of Didier Janicot, then proposed a different kind of publication. Based on a logic that incorporated opposition scenarios, moving away from the analytical approach to specific technical movements in favor of the more comprehensive concept of 'body forms', this work was an effort to synthesize the author's excellent sporting experience with scientific knowledge that had previously been poorly integrated or even neglected. Progress has certainly been made. However, it remains incomplete, hampered by the weight of habit and insufficient federal policy implementation.

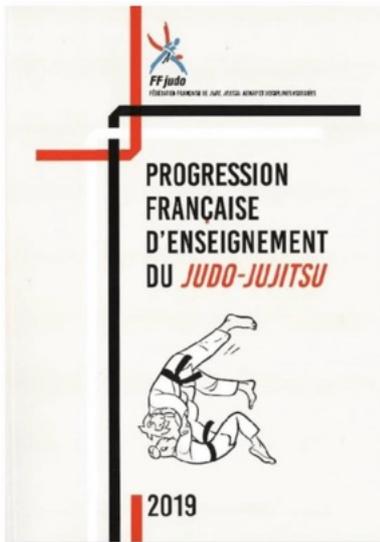
It is regrettable that the publication of the work undertaken in 2019 for the purpose of updating does not continue along the path laid out by the didactic approach initiated in 1977 by Daniel Roche with the *Pedagogical Approach for 6-9 year olds* and then continued by Didier Janicot and his collaborators. The excessive return to analysis and the failure to take context into account mark a halt, or even a regression, which remains too far removed from the established principles of motor skill learning.



Les cahiers techniques et pédagogiques



FFJDA, Méthode française d'enseignement du judo-jujitsu



*Progression française
d'enseignement du judo-jujitsu, 2019*

The Copernican revolution in judo teaching in France is incomplete. Admittedly, the focus on discipline has slowly given way to a more attentive approach to student progress. However, the relevance of learning situations faces a persistent obstacle: the content of the official 'methods' that have been used since the beginning and, as a corollary, the lack of a definition of a true progression in teaching 'how to fight' in judo.

The contribution presented here focuses precisely on this last point and on the need, as I see it, to gradually train young judoka in the reality of *randori* and *shiai*, without distinguishing between what constitutes technical knowledge and what constitutes tactical knowledge. The federal institution's mission is to provide new generations of judo teachers with high-quality teaching content and methodology that maintain the motivation of new members and reflect the advances and expectations of the current era.

4.3

TEACHING JUDO AT SCHOOL

An alternative to the official proposals emerged in the late 1990s. Deliberately ignored by federal authorities who were aware of the issue but had little interest in teaching judo in secondary schools, it achieved only limited success. From 1995 to 2001, the Ministry of National Education asked a group of experts, the Technical Disciplinary Group (GTD), to draft a national program for physical education and sports instruction in general and technological education from 6th to 12th grade. It was in this capacity that I was asked to design and draft the section on judo in schools. The fundamental difference in approach required for the drafting of the programs relates to the central place given to the concept of competence. Thus, a distinction had to be made between the skills specific to the activity and methodological and social skills. Whereas in traditional teaching, the approach and assessment are based on technical knowledge, the ministerial directive requires a measurement of the student's achievements and a broad understanding of the discipline. In other words, "judo skills" can be broken down, relatively speaking, into several roles ranging from practitioner to spectator, referee, and coach. The drafting of a teaching program, meanwhile, required the definition of progressive levels of mastery, specifying starting and finishing levels, content and objectives, criteria, and assessment procedures.

Three levels were chosen. The first cycle, introductory, corresponds to sixth grade. The skill to be acquired is "Falling and Throwing without Risk." It consists of four specific skills: 1) knowing how to fall and throw while controlling the opponent's fall, 2) bringing the opponent to the ground on their back to immobilize

A CENTURY OF JUDO TEACHING IN FRANCE (1925-2025)

them, 3) using the opponent's movements to carry out direct attacks, and 4) accepting the fight.

The second cycle, at the end of middle school, is for advanced students. The skill to be acquired is "Building the Offensive." It corresponds to the end of middle school level. It consists of four specific skills: 1) Varying the form and opportunities for direct attacks, 2) Linking attacks according to the opponent's reactions (linking in the same direction as the initial attack or in a direction complementary to the initial attack), 3) Preparing for combat (identifying the opponent's strengths and weaknesses, knowing and applying the essential rules of refereeing), 4) Developing a tactical plan and testing it during combat.

The final cycle is that of the end of studies in the senior year. The skill to be acquired is "Leading the Confrontation." It comprises four specific skills: 1) Building an individualized attack system, 2) Ensuring the offensive continues, 3) Influencing the opponent's attitude and behavior, 4) Managing resources according to the changing balance of power.

Defining levels of practice, developing teaching content, establishing assessment criteria and procedures, etc., are all part of the very concept of learning progression. Each of these levels is associated with a defined context of achievement that specifies the level of opposition for testing the targeted skills. Here, these are themed forms of randori with increasing degrees of opposition.

Judo expertise no longer means accumulating knowledge in order to reach a higher grade. The criterion is competence in a given situation. Technique becomes a tool at the service of the student's expertise. Knowledge is no longer cumulative and based on the complexity of movements. It becomes concentric, serving to overcome increasingly difficult levels.

This approach is consistent with the internal logic of judo, which places the balance of power inherent in all forms of combat at the heart of the student's activity. It is organized in accordance with a strong external logic of cultural and educational elements. Etymologically, to combat means "to fight with." Judo is a duel, it is also a duet. Just because fight is central doesn't mean it has to come first. Similarly, references to high-level models and the choices that experienced competitors are forced to make in order to achieve their performance goals should not encourage teachers to prioritize the pursuit of efficiency. The training of the judoka must precede that of the competitor. Thus, the concept of performance, at the student level, will be understood in the Anglo-Saxon sense of the term, *i.e.*, in terms of optimizing personal achievement. Combat must remain a game in which the essential thing is to have surpassed oneself, not to have surpassed one's opponents. It is on this condition that judo can enable greater self-knowledge and self-assertion, and thus lead to autonomy. The choice to compete and practice judo as a sport must be made by the student, not by their parents or teacher, who must remain a guide.

As a corollary to this approach, it is worth examining the definition of the meaning given to technique in judo. History and experience show us that every technical movement is unstable, individual, adaptive, constantly evolving, and highly dependent on the context in which it is applied. Thus, the



Document d'accompagnement des programmes d'EPS



Throws and kyu

context of the fight determines the form and logic of the actions. The technical and tactical distinction is all the less valid given that each offensive or defensive action is dictated by circumstances. The reproduction of projection movements, while still relevant for reasons of anatomy and biomechanics, can no longer be imposed for aesthetic reasons. In addition to the teaching of morphokinesis (*morpho*: form, *kinesis*: movement), whose effectiveness cannot be denied, there is a decisive shift towards an approach that favors topokinesis (*topos*: place, objective, *kinesis*: movement). As an anecdote, let us recall the outraged reactions of certain purists at the sight of drop *seoi nage* “invented” by Jean-Jacques Mounier in the early 1970s. Although it clashed with the ideals of the time, the adaptation of a projection in a situation where the combatants opted for a more crouched position was not very original, as evidenced by the gestures of the wrestlers reproduced on ancient Greek vases.

This observation leads me to propose a different definition of technique in judo, moving away from the idea of a form to be reproduced and instead considering technique as “*a solution to the problem posed by the opponent.*” As an immediate effect, teaching thus gives priority to teaching problems and individualizing solutions. From this perspective, the distinction between technique and tactics loses all meaning. The *kyu* grading scale is no longer based on a constantly evolving technical corpus, but on the student's ability to solve categories of problems.¹⁶

Introduced in France in the early 1900s, this Japanese art experienced remarkable growth in the second half of the 20th century. Collective representations were built on the image of a traditional Japan rich in culture and the strength and wisdom of its samurai warriors. But judo is above all a human activity that reflects its host society. What Japanese martial arts represent in society and for their practitioners evolves along with lifestyles and physical practices. Tastes and expectations are constantly changing. The way judo is taught must take into account the interests of those who practice it. The view of teaching methods and their purposes cannot be reduced to a collection of techniques. Did not Jacques Ullmann, philosopher and historian of education, declare: “*It is indeed foolish to reduce the history of physical education to that of a series of movements. Ideas matter more than gestures in physical education.*”¹⁷ Judo, which, let us not forget, was conceived as a method of physical, intellectual, and moral education, is no exception to this rule.

¹⁶ On the one hand, the technical repertoire is constantly evolving. The *gokyo* comprises 40, but today the Kodokan recognizes 100 different forms (68 throws and 32 controls). On the other hand, in judo, as in boxing or wrestling, the teacher's first task is to “form a pair” of practitioners who interact with each other. Further learning cannot be effective without acceptance of physical contact and awareness of the other person's body, which is essential for deciding when to initiate actions.

¹⁷ Jacques Ullmann, *De la gymnastique aux sports modernes. Histoire des doctrines de l'éducation physique*, (3^e éd. Revue, corrigée et augmentée), Paris, Vrin, 1977.

5.

TEACHING JUDO TACTICS

Judo instruction carries with it the characteristic of cultural and philosophical heritage that places technical knowledge at the center of the content to be transmitted. The main teaching tool, demonstration, illustrates in most cases a situation in which a stationary and compliant partner serves as a guinea pig and mimics the attitude of a virtual opponent. While in many countries, the description of the complexity of technical movements is the subject of close attention by all authors of teaching progressions published by official federal institutions, these works devote very little attention to the processes that help beginners overcome the degrees of difficulty that arise when they are placed in a combat situation. Daily teaching is based on texts that prioritize the complexity of movements and ignore the difficulty of putting them into action, leaving this solely to the initiative of the student. Over time, many teachers aware of this paradox have developed their own approaches and proposed methods that do not separate technical knowledge from the tactical context of its application.¹⁸ However, as rich as they may be, these personal solutions have mostly remained individual or too confidential.

The purpose of this discussion is to examine the knowledge that should be passed on in judo. By definition, the main goal of the discipline founded by Kano is to throw, immobilize, or force someone who has the same goal but no intention of cooperating to give up. Thus, while technical knowledge remains an essential component in the pursuit of this goal, it cannot be achieved without taking into account the tactics inherent in the context of the opposition. While didactic reflection on this theme is widespread, even abundant, in all individual and team opposition sports, judo is surprisingly silent on the subject.¹⁹

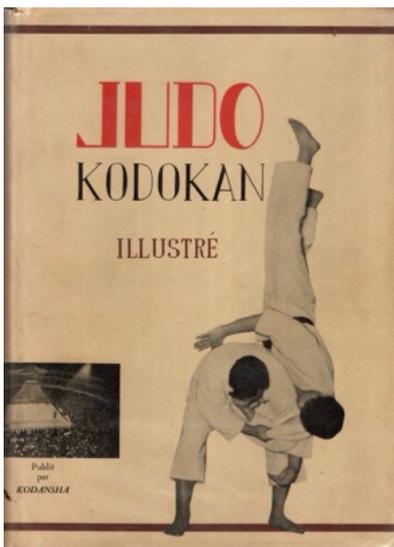
Three areas will enable us to reflect on this question. The first concerns cultural heritage and the confrontation of concepts that coexist within an activity that is constantly evolving and seeking new models. The second area aims to highlight the attempts at pedagogical innovation made by those who have sought to rethink teaching content. Finally, we will examine the conditions that need to be met in order to provide concrete and useful answers to teachers with a view to prioritizing content aimed at tactically building the judoka's "know how to fight".

¹⁸ To avoid any semantic ambiguity, I will opt for the distinction that has its roots in military art and which retains a hierarchical logic between the term strategy, "a long-term global vision," and the term tactics, "a mobilization of available resources" in the immediacy of action. For example, I will distinguish between the strategic decision of an athlete preparing for an Olympic championship over the long term and the tactical choice of a competitor engaged in extra time in a decisive match. Tactics is an activity in progress, while strategy is a decision-making activity prior to action.

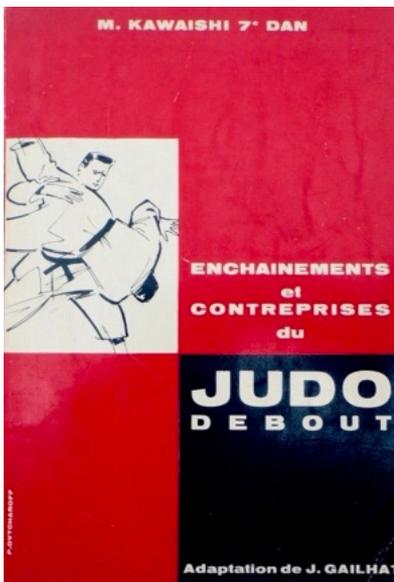
¹⁹ Robert Mérand, Justin Teissié, and René Deleplace were the founders of the "tactical-technical" movement, which, from the late 1950s onwards, profoundly transformed the approach to and teaching of team sports in France. The activity is conceived as a constant dialectic between attack and defense. For René Deleplace, the great rugby theorist, technical movements are intertwined with tactical choices. Conversely, the effectiveness of technical movements optimizes tactical choices.

5.1

AESTHETICS AS A LEGACY



Judo Kodokan Illustré



Les enchaînements et les contreprises du judo debout

Historically, judo instruction has prioritized aesthetics over function. It has been noted that, in the early post-war decades, competition played only a minor role, and that judo was practiced “with” rather than “against” others. This choice reflects a demand for style. In clubs, broken bodies and forceful defenses were prohibited or despised. The rule is implicit. Effectiveness is only valuable in the beauty of the movement. Nobility lies in “beautiful judo,” in those movements that inspired Roland Barthes to write: “It is said that judo contains a secret part of symbolism; even in its efficiency, it involves restrained, precise but short movements, drawn just right but with a line without volume.”²⁰ For many teachers, counter-moves are discredited. Groundwork specialists are feared and respected, but they are far from receiving the admiration given to experts in sweeps and “circular entries.” It would be wrong to generalize this point of view to all judoka of that era. However, despite their differences, they all agreed that the ideal movement was an absolute and definitive movement so perfectly executed that it was beyond sensation and consciousness.

The collective desire to prioritize knowledge of the technique itself is evident in the texts. The content of publications related to both the “Kodokan method” and the “Kawaishi method” provides proof of this through their emphasis on encyclopedic knowledge of the multiplicity of forms. The section devoted to what is then defined as sequences or combinations is very minimalist. No mention is made of this in the book *Ma Méthode de Judo*. In the *Judo Kodokan Illustré*, only 6 of the 286 pages are dedicated to the subject.²¹ It was not until 1959 that the first book on this subject, *Les enchaînements et les contreprises du judo debout (Sequences and Counter-Moves in Standing Judo)*, was published, for both political and technical reasons. In the preface, signed by both Kawaishi and his assistant Jean Gailhat, we read:

The follow-up would lack purity... the counterattack would not be Judo. This somewhat simplistic opinion was very widespread when Judo first began in France. Need I say more? It was not my opinion. But I let it be said,

²⁰ Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, Paris, Le Seuil, [1957] 1970, p. 13.

²¹ Kodokan, *Judo Kodokan illustré*, Tokyo, Dai-Nippon Yubenkai Kodansha, 1955, 286 p.

*because my students had enough to do learning the basics of what I called the fundamentals, so I didn't want them to fall too early into the Western habit of wanting to understand long before they were able to achieve.*²²

This reveals an implicit hierarchy of knowledge. Access to combinations of actions, and therefore to the tactical patterns they involve, can only be achieved once the forms of throws have been fully mastered. Kyozo Mifune provides further evidence of this in his seminal work, *Canon of Judo*.²³ In the introduction to the chapter on blocks and counterattacks (*ura waza*), the 10th dan expert makes this very clear. He states: “Against a well-executed technique, there is no room for defense or counterattack.” When the execution is imperfect, the opponent's technique offers opportunities for attack, as demonstrated in the 26 richly illustrated pages that follow. On the other hand, significantly, the continuation of the attack by *tori*, i.e., the sequence of offensive actions, is reduced to a text without images, simply describing a series of scenarios on one and a half pages: “1. If you are unable to throw your opponent with *ko soto gari* or *ashi barai*, you should immediately try *o soto gari* on that leg. 2. When your left *hiza guruma* has not been effective, quickly switch to *tomoe nage* or *ippon seoi nage*, or try *o soto gari* on the right when you reposition yourself. Both are very effective...”

The priority remains direct attack, with a pure and controlled movement, whether the opportunity is chosen or given by a poorly executed attempt by the opponent. It is still possible for *tori* to continue their action, but the ultimate goal is the perfect, aesthetically correct execution of the movement. Thus, knowledge of the basics of *kuzushi*, *tsukuri*, and *kake* resonates like a leitmotif in all publications and teaching courses that echo the Japanese style.²⁴

By providing a very detailed description of each movement, the 1966 “French method” demonstrates the institution's desire to focus on a broader mastery of blocks, dodges, combinations, confusions, and counterattacks. In doing so, it remains faithful to the same concept of an initial foundation, which is an essential prerequisite for any tactical extension. Like the Kodokan and Kawaishi “methods,” the “French method” appears to be a catalog of compartmentalized and supposedly cumulative knowledge. The forms of projection or control and surrender are divided into separate categories across all belt levels from white to brown. In fact, they constitute a sum of gestures and aesthetic knowledge that are external to the reality of an activity that claims the efficiency of its technical repertoire. The educational value of the movement, its ease of execution, and its psychological effect on the student are presented as justifications for the ordering of

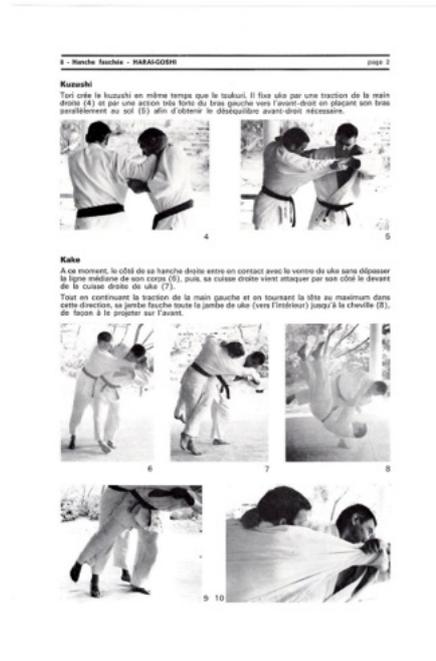


Canon of Judo

²² Mikinosuke Kawaishi, *Les enchaînements et les contreprises du judo debout suivis des règles commentées d'arbitrage de l'union européenne de Judo*, Paris, Édition privée, 1959, 159 p.

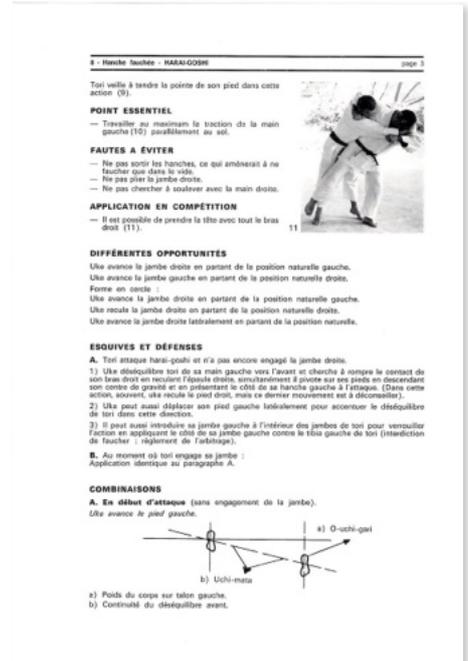
²³ Kyozo Mifune, *Canon of Judo*, Tokyo, Seibundo Shinkosha, 1956, 224 p.

²⁴ In 2017 and 2019, the *Bulletin of the Association for the Scientific Studies on Judo* devoted two articles to learning tactics in school judo. However, this attempt at innovation has not escaped the weight of tradition or a hierarchical logic that is unable to break free from the dominant model of technical knowledge and kata. Yuji Ozawa et al., “Proposal for Tactics Learned in Junior High School Judo Lessons (Part 1) -Utilizing ‘Nage no kata’ that can be Used in Class-,” *Bulletin of the Association for the Scientific Studies on Judo*, Kodokan, Tokyo, Report 16, 2017, pp. 109-117. and Yuji Ozawa et al., “Proposal for Tactics Learned in Junior High School Judo Lessons (Part 2) -Utilizing ‘Opportunity to Use a Technique’ that can be Used in Lesson-,” *op.cit.*, Report 17, 2019, pp. 101-112.



Harai goshi par Henri Courtine

techniques. In reality, they are only used to justify the choice of o goshi as the first technique to be studied by the student. Tactical sense is perceived as a gift. Premeditated, thoughtful, and non-spontaneous calculation, which consists of provoking and then exploiting the opponent's reaction, does not elicit the same admiration because it does not fit into the norms of elegant and distinctive judo. The underlying



logic reflects a philosophical bias that seeks to prioritize the goals advocated by Kano, to intellectualize and euphemize the confrontation by giving its form greater importance than the result. In the 1950s and 1960s, judo was an elitist practice which, through its implicit rules and customs, translated into action a habitus, a predisposition to follow a set of values specific to the upper classes of society, which then dominated the activity. Judo was practiced with a focus on effort, courtesy, the pursuit of excellence, and self-control.

5.2 TEACHING METHODS AND TACTICAL THINKING

This vision of judo quickly came into conflict with the sporting trend that gained momentum following the introduction of the discipline into the Olympic program and the accompanying democratization.²⁵ Added to this is a dual internal revolution, less visible but equally significant. On the one hand, the reference point is being overturned. The previously unchallenged expertise of the master is gradually being challenged and questioned by the proven effectiveness of the champion holder of sporting titles. On the other hand, a shift is taking place in the leadership of French judo, which is increasingly occupied by individuals from within its ranks who have become civil servants due to their expertise. In a period of strong growth in membership

²⁵ Michel Brousse, « Ondes de choc, conflits politico-culturels et développement du judo mondial », Thierry Terret, textes réunis par, *Sport et Géopolitique*, Paris, L'Harmattan, p. 55-75.
24

corresponding to the “Trente Glorieuses” (the thirty glorious years), bureaucracy and day-to-day administrative management are becoming increasingly important. Didactic reflection is not a priority.

The pro-sports movement continued into the 1990s. It introduced new approaches that can be identified, on the one hand, in terms of the gradual replacement of the original educational purpose with a performance objective and, on the other hand, by a hybridization of the technical field as a direct effect of globalization and the influence of athletes rich in experience in folk struggles similar to judo. Long the sole source of the forms taught in clubs, both for the variety of movements and for their symbolic and encyclopedic knowledge, refined, accurate, and aesthetic Japanese knowledge was thus questioned and even replaced by forms mainly dictated by profitability in line with the renewed constraints of sports regulations.

It would be a mistake to assume that many teachers do not circumvent the conceptual flaw in official programs and leave the tactical aspect unaddressed. The proliferation of courses led by excellent stylists, but also by an increasing number of recognized competitors, greatly contributes to the dissemination of knowledge that is more attuned to the tactical context specific to combat situations. It seems that this acquired knowledge primarily benefits those who have chosen to pursue competitive judo. However, it must be noted that no progression, presenting a general overview of the stages that beginner students must go through to reach advanced and then expert levels, synthesizes this multitude of individual contributions.

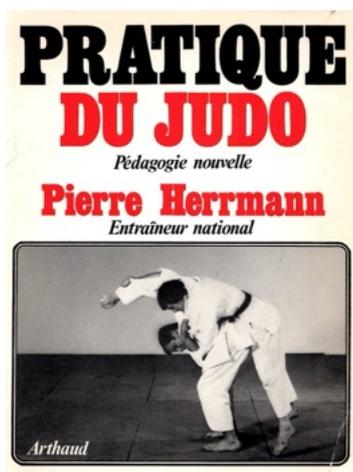
This observation, shared by many, does not alter the content of official methods, which in most countries are based unconditionally on a *gokyo* designed in 1895 and then revised in 1920. In a cultural and social context that is incomparable, it is legitimate to question the objective of the Japanese classification, *i.e.*, what “judo expertise” has meant at different periods over the past century. From an educational point of view, everyone has the right to question the names “Kodokan method,” “Kawaishi method,” and “French method,” their content, the nature of their specificities and differences, but also the arguments of their proponents. More generally, should we consider these to be methods in their own right, promoting a vision of humanity and society through the development of a particular physical activity, or should we view them as unique classifications of technical knowledge associated with the theoretical teaching of judo?

Etymologically, a teaching method implies a progression from an initial level to a final level (the notion of an objective to be achieved should be distinguished from the concept of a goal).²⁶ It is a path made up of successive stages on which the student is accompanied by the teacher. The definition of a method cannot be reduced to a sum of technical knowledge to be acquired. Situations involving assessment and precise verification of the target level are an integral part of any learning progression. Should we consider that there are unchanging aspects of human nature that lead us to favor the same skills regardless of differences in era and cultural, political, and social environments? Adopting this point of view would be tantamount to denying the mosaic of trends and specificities built up over time, to understanding judo only in a supposedly original and pure form. Every teacher is aware that no method is timeless. Each bears the marks of the cultural, social, and political influences of its time.

The first and undoubtedly the only successful alternative to traditional “methods” was proposed by Peter Herrmann, who published *Pratique du judo (Practice of Judo)* in 1976. In the preface, Henri Courtine clearly and enthusiastically sets out the author's intentions.

Herrmann is one of those very rare “white” judokas that the Japanese have had to reckon with in the very recent past. His experience is unparalleled [...] Herrmann sensed early on

²⁶ Defining a teaching method means situating it in relation to an educational act that is itself conducted and constructed at a specific time, based on a system of goals and values, a specific body of knowledge, and the trainer's perception of the student to be trained.



Pratique du judo
Pédagogie nouvelle

that there was a gap between the judo taught in most clubs and the reality of high-level competition. He wanted to shake up a rigid academicism and ensure that beginners, from their very first steps on the tatami, could fully embrace what they would inevitably encounter one day. Herrmann does not disregard the general principles of judo; on the contrary, he refers to them insistently. It is rather in the application of the fundamental laws that Pierre brings something new. In fact, it is all the fruit of his experience, his reflection, and a thousand fights...²⁷

A renowned champion, Peter Herrmann was part of the great German team alongside Klaus Glahn, Wolfgang Hoffmann, Gerd Egger, and others, which dominated Europe at the time. Settling in Grenoble in 1970, he became the coach of the French national team. His influence was such that French judo owes much to his expertise in winning international and world titles. The book, published by Arthaud editions, is innovative. Unlike belt-based content programs that associate technical movements with grade levels, it offers a breakdown based on two observations: on the one hand, the reality of the throws used during matches and, on the other, a taxonomy of tactical patterns derived from his analysis of combat situations. Progress is no longer measured by the accumulation of knowledge but by the gradual experimentation with the reality of opposition, a reality that Henri Courtine recognized every practitioner would eventually face. For Peter Herrmann, what constitutes the long-term goal of classical design becomes an essential prerequisite. The author writes:

*There are eight different types of attacks and counterattacks. These attacks allow judokas to use their techniques in a variety of combat situations and to pursue them intelligently and effectively. [...] To begin learning judo in a simple, clear, and concrete way, let's consider seven groups of throws. Each consists of a primary technique and a secondary technique.*²⁸

To the seven groups presented, Herrmann adds the group of sweeps and specifies the judo exercises that should be used progressively in order to master them. Students are thus encouraged to make individual choices based on their preferences and abilities in order to determine their preferred forms of attack and the tactical situations they particularly enjoy. The second part of the book revisits the seven families of techniques with the dual aim of increasing their complexity and improving their effectiveness. Although Peter Herrmann's book does not formally link the content it offers to the mastery scale represented by the hierarchy of grades, the approach it presents is avant-garde because it offers a genuine methodology for building the “know how to fight” in judo.

Première partie

Voici maintenant un tableau général sur la première partie du travail. Il indique la composition du travail technique et tactique dans la méthode.

Formes d'attaque	Groupe de projection						
	UCHI-KOMI	NAGE-KOMI	YATSUKOKU-GEIKO	KAKARI-GEIKO	RANDORI	SHIAI	SAWARI
1 Uchi-komi (à la main)							
2 Nage-komi (à la main)							
3 Uchi-komi (à la main)							
4 Uchi-komi (à la main)							
5 Uchi-komi (à la main)							
6 Nage-komi (à la main)							
7 Uchi-komi (à la main)							

Formes d'attaque	Groupe de projection						
	UCHI-KOMI	NAGE-KOMI	YATSUKOKU-GEIKO	KAKARI-GEIKO	RANDORI	SHIAI	SAWARI
2 mois							
3 mois							
4 mois							
6 mois							
8 mois							
+ 8 mois							

27 Pierre Herrmann, *Pratique du Judo, pédagogie nouvelle*, Paris, Arthaud, 1976, 231 p.

28 Peter Herrmann, *op. cit.*

What can be said about the lack of official consideration given to such an original and relevant proposal, which has been implicitly validated by all stakeholders in the sports field? Two main reasons can be cited. The first relates to cultural conservatism and the habits of the still-active generation of teachers and leaders who are resistant to change.²⁹ The second reason relates to the speed and depth of the transformations that began in the late 1970s and have continued to accelerate. First, massification and rejuvenation have led to a renewal of both the student and teaching populations over the course of two decades. Then, the sportification of the discipline and the professionalization of elite fighters have, in a way, empowered trends that until then had remained united around the same disciplinary concept. The economic and managerial approach of recent years has favored the segmentation of judo into increasingly distinct sub-entities. Taïso, baby judo, judo for children, self-defense, leisure activities for adults, ranking lists for young children, etc., are all sectors in which specific objectives and the utilitarian logic of immediacy take precedence over a global vision that favors a comprehensive, forward-looking policy. Such fragmentation makes it difficult to develop a didactic approach that integrates the tactical development of the judoka.

5.3

TACTICS AND AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

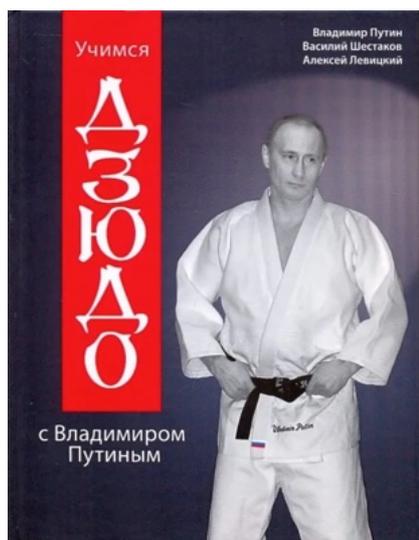
The subject, however, does not leave one indifferent. In France, to varying degrees, René Rambier, Didier Janicot, Patrick Rosso, and Stéphane Frémont have examined the issue.³⁰ Similarly, a look at scientific publications shows that researchers have long been interested in this question. Pioneers in this field, specialists in the Soviet Union and East Germany, developed studies that remained confidential for a long time but are still relevant today despite advances in technology. Doesn't the book by Vladimir Putin, Vasily Shestakov, and Alexy Levitsky, *Learning Judo with Vladimir Putin*, reproduce the shorthand symbols and mathematical formulas developed long ago in a chapter entitled "How to objectively assess the level of proficiency in judo"? This same shorthand was already being used to draw comparative analyses between Japanese and Soviet judo in the mid-1970s.³¹

²⁹ Published the following year in Germany, Peter Herrmann's text received a much more favorable reception across the Rhine, to the point that it was reprinted several times. Peter Herrmann, *Neue Lehrmethoden der Judo-Praxis*, Niedernhausen, Falken Verlag, 1977, 223 p.

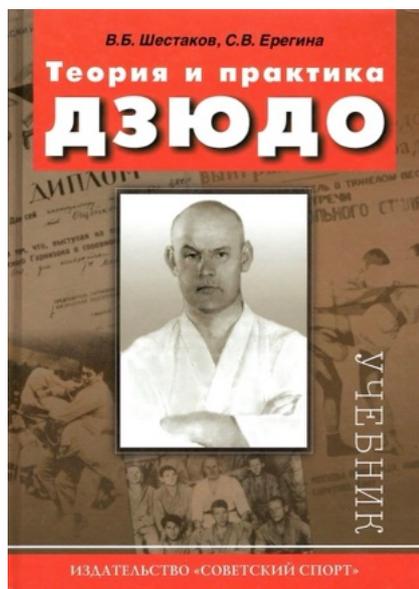
³⁰ René Rambier, *Contribution à l'analyse technico-tactique de l'attaque en nage waza : judo debout*, Paris, INSEP, 1987 ; Janicot Didier, Pouillart Gilbert, *Le Judo*, Toulouse, Éditions Milan, 1997, 127 p. ; Patrick Rosso, Stéphane Frémont, Gilbert Avanzini. « La tactique en judo », *Les Cahiers de l'Entraîneur*, INSEP, 2006, p. 6-13.

³¹ Vladimir Putin, Vasily Shestakov, and Alexy Levitsky, *Learning Judo with Vladimir Putin*, Moscow, Olma-Press, 2002, pp. 131-135, and Committee for Physical Culture and Sport under the Council of Ministers of the USSR, Main Department of Sports and Martial Arts Methodology, for administrative use, *Analysis of the Results of Young Judoists from the USSR at International Competitions in 1976, Guidelines*, Moscow, 1977. 78 p. See also pages 73-82: "Tactical training in judo" in Vasily Shestakov and Svetlana Eregina, *Theory and practice of judo*, 2011, 448 p.

ESSAY FOR THE GRADE OF HACHIDAN



Learning Judo with Vladimir Putin



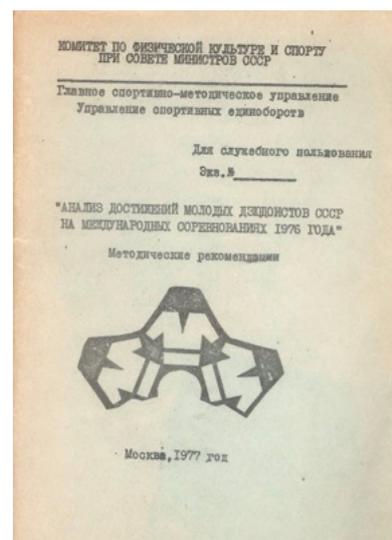
Judo, Theory and Practice

All of these elements, reinforced by a recent review of articles devoted to tactical aspects in judo, published in 2010 by Bianca Miarka of the University of São Paulo, provide us with information both on the studies referred to and on the authors' shared understanding of the concept of tactics in judo.³²

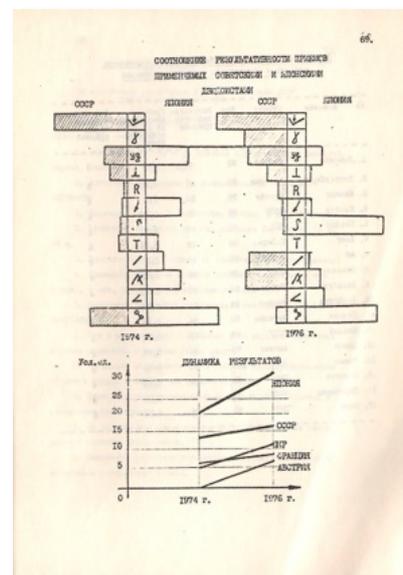
First of all, high-level competition is the only place where observation can take place. In fact, tactics can only be defined in relation to those of the sporting elite. The resulting analysis and quantification provide a schematic representation distinguishing between: the name of the effective technique, the degree of effectiveness, the variety of attack forms used, the modes of grip, the type of ground connections, and the style of counterattack. Movement patterns and attack directions are scrutinized in detail and subjected to statistical analysis coupled with gender, age, weight categories, and sometimes even levels of expertise (national or international).

There are multiple criteria, including the morphological characteristics of the opponent, the specificities of the rules of arbitration, as well as elements related to physiology, recovery methods, and motivational aspects. However, there is one notable omission. Only the final technique that results in a score is taken into account. The sequences of actions, the actual nature of which is

confirmed by visual observation of the fights, are rarely taken into account in studies.³³



Analysis of the results of young judokas from the USSR at international competitions in 1976



³² Bianca Miarka et al., « Técnica y tàctica en judo: una revisión », *Revista de Artes Marciales Asiáticas*, Vol. 5 n° 1, 2010, p. 91-112.

³³ The same applies to the IJF statistics and refereeing records, which record scores based on the official list of recognized techniques, but not the sequences that led to their effectiveness.

However, this descriptive observation has been superseded by Kenichiro Agemizu's original proposals. The head coach at Tokai University proposes a system similar to Peter Herrmann's thinking. The Japanese expert innovates by developing a genuine "method of improvement" to present his concept of training in the technical and tactical field. In 2017, he published his first book, *Judo Basics and Tactics*, which he expanded upon two years later with The Winning Method of Tokai University Judo School. The cover states: "How to acquire the mindset and skills necessary to radically change your judo, explained by an instructor who has trained many world-class athletes."³⁴

What is the nature of the promised change? Building on the exceptional results achieved by the fighters under his responsibility, the author has developed a training system aimed at optimizing performance and developing athletes' ability to make relevant decisions based on the conditions and changing context of the fight. He selects six main techniques and four secondary techniques, which he associates with the characteristics of the opponent (similar guard, reverse guard, taller, same height, shorter). He begins his presentation by highlighting the need for self-assessment to identify the fighter's strengths and weaknesses, as well as areas for improvement. Examples follow to illustrate the proposals in concrete terms. This approach offers two undeniable advantages. On the one hand, it opts for the individualization of the champion's journey and sets specific performance goals. On the other hand, Kenichiro Agemizu's approach, far from providing stereotypical answers, aims, like Peter Herrmann's methodology, to develop a quality that is essential for any competitor: the ability to adapt and improvise, without which there can be no autonomy in decision-making and no relevance in choices.



Books by Agemizu Kenichiro



³⁴ Kenichiro Agemizu, *Basics and Tactics*, Jitsugyogyo no Nihonsha Ltd., 2017, 192 p.; *Judo, the winning method*, Seibundo Shinkosha, 2019, 192, p.

5.4

RELEVANCE AND IRRELEVANCE OF MODELS

However, as relevant, rigorous, and effective as these investigations and proposals may be, they highlight a fundamental point: tactics are defined with reference to elite judo. But to extract the model from the specific context of high-level competition and transpose it as is to club-level teaching is to ignore the constraints that weigh on competitors and require adaptations that even an average judoka will never face. The lack of theoretical reflection leading to a shared definition of “knowing how to fight” results in the absence of a hierarchical structure for technical and tactical learning correlated with the kyu grading system.

The standing-ground connection is an excellent example of the failure to take into account the context and the real purpose of the action. A fundamental aspect in the pursuit of offense in competition, but very often taught prematurely, it is most often presented to very young beginners in sequences such as *o soto gari - hon gesa gatame*. A true pedagogical misinterpretation, this sequence of actions is nothing more than an illusion created by teachers who pretend to ignore that such continuity only has a purpose in the context of seeking performance in championships. In a sporting context, it is justified in the event of an imperfect execution (poor positioning, poor control, loss of balance, etc.) or to avoid a fall. However, for a beginner, the sole objective should be technical mastery, not victory. The role of the teacher should focus on improving the conditions for performing the throw and on the proper execution of the fall by *uke*. Maintaining balance and ensuring the partner's fall are the only acceptable objectives for *tori*. The simulated throws and the supposed continuity of certain video sequences on social media raise questions about the approach of some teachers.

Unlike team sports and individual competitive sports, judo lags behind in terms of teaching methodology. The insistence on maintaining, or even developing, analytical and associationist approaches to learning technical movements, coupled with a marked reluctance to incorporate scientific advances in motor learning, has led to proposals that contradict the internal logic of combat activities.³⁵ The alleged innovation of *kodomo no kata* provides us with another example.³⁶ The sequence of situations presented borrows from mime. Focusing on a decontextualized and artificial method of reproducing form, the proposal remains detached from the reality of opposition that gives meaning to combat. The inconsistencies that this production is not immune to only reinforce the falsely analytical approach focused solely on the aesthetics of the movements. The whole thing overlooks the motivation and expectations of today's youth and, above all, ignores the logic of confrontation, an absolute constant that is nevertheless strong in each of the historical *kata* but completely absent here.

³⁵ Pierre Parlebas developed the concept of internal logic. Considering the motor behaviors of the practitioner as the manifestation of their interaction with the environment, he defines the internal logic of activities as the “system of relevant features of a motor situation and the consequences that this system entails in the accomplishment of the corresponding motor action.” For Pierre Parlebas, judo belongs to a field of action characterized by motor actions that organize an inter-individual confrontation in a codified situation. For the author, these situations require mastery of techniques for opposing an opponent, the ability to anticipate, and the will to win. Pierre Parlebas, *Contribution to a commented lexicon in motor action science*, Paris, Insep, 1981, 332 p.

³⁶ <https://www.ijf.org/news/show/new-version-kodomo-no-kata>

What was expected was an updated *kata* that prepares for randori and compensates for the incompleteness of an outdated form without backward throws, without combinations of actions and without counter-moves, a realistic *kata* that introduces the balance of power, a *kata* that shows the technical and tactical richness of judo. Does the Kodokan have a monopoly on the creation of *kata*? In their day, experts such as Mifune and those at Waseda University did not hesitate to innovate, as did those in other countries later on.³⁷

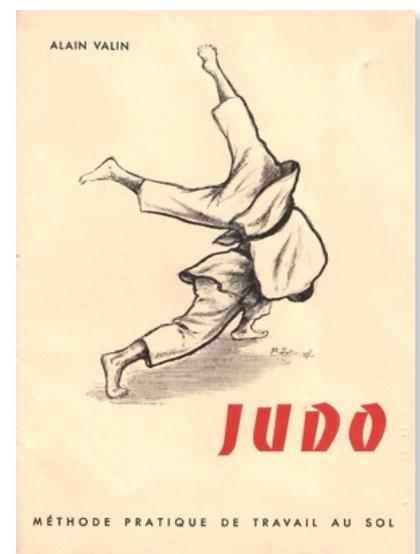
What are the objectives pursued in developing *kodomo no kata*? Presented as an “introduction to the basics of judo” and an “effective resource for working with young and old alike,” the joint proposal by the Kodokan and the FFJ does not provide answers to fundamental questions such as: How should we prioritize learning the difficulties inherent in transitioning from partner to opponent? When and how should we introduce the concepts of evasion and blocking? When and how should we address the concept of counterattack? How should we structure the teaching of the concept of action-reaction-action over time? How can we build complex tactical patterns for yellow, green, and brown belts? These are just a few of the questions that teachers who want to help their students progress ask themselves every day, and to which they can only provide individual answers.

The teaching of *ne waza* follows a different logic from that of *tachi waza*. Much greater emphasis is placed on tactics, fighting positions, and the interaction between the two competitors. There are many reasons for this, which are linked to the history of the discipline. The aura of standing judo is largely due to the added nobility and intellectualism accorded to it by followers of the Kodokan school. Ground judo specialists are far from receiving the admiration given to recognized stylists. The current image of Kosen still attests to this today. Very early on, however, a methodical approach of a different nature emerged in the field of *ne waza* teaching. This followed the arrival in France of two great experts, Tamio Kurihara and Tsunetane Oda, who gave a decisive boost to a ground practice that had previously been held in very low esteem.

In France, *ne waza* is uncharted territory.³⁸ In his book, published in 1953, *Judo au sol, méthode pratique de combat au sol, la position inférieure* (*Ground Judo, Practical Method of Ground Fighting, the Lower*



<https://www.ijf.org/news/show/new-version-kodomo-no-kata>



Judo, méthode pratique de travail au sol

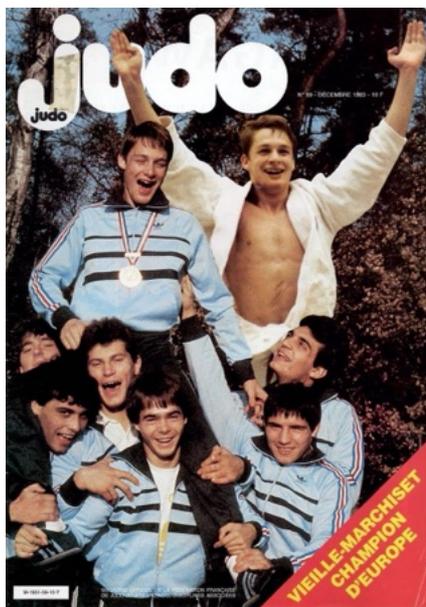
³⁷ Non-Kodokan kata were created not only in Japan but also in several other countries, such as Holland, Germany, Denmark, the United Kingdom, and the United States. See also Carl de Créé, “Shōnen Jūdō-No-Kata [Forms of Jūdō for Juveniles]: An Experimental Japanese Teaching Approach to Jūdō Skill Acquisition in Children Considered from a Historic-Pedagogical Perspective: Part 2,” *Journal of Combat Sports and Martial Arts*, vol. 4, 2013, pp. 95–111.

³⁸ Initially in France, only the “Kawaishi method” was accepted. Jean Zin, who did not receive approval, was punished for publishing a book on judo without the authorization of his peers. Minoru Mochizuki was not allowed to demonstrate Kodokan techniques. Because he submitted proofs rather than a manuscript, Alain Valin was banned from recommending and advertising his book on ground judo in the federal magazine, despite the quality and precision of his analysis, which still makes it a model of its kind today.

Position), Alain Valin states: "Ground Judo is rarely practiced by French judokas today. Some even avoid it systematically, as one avoids bad encounters!"³⁹ Other works followed, such as Raymond Sasia's *Judo au sol, méthode d'entraînement et de perfectionnement (Ground Judo, Training and Improvement Method)* and Jacques Beaudouin's *Ne-waza, le dernier mot du judo (Ne-waza, the Last Word in Judo)*. In these publications, as in those that followed, taking into account the context of the confrontation and the complementarity of actions appears to be an essential prerequisite for the development of technical solutions, which are most often interlinked. Many experts developed learning and improvement methods that enriched *ne waza*. Kudo, Okano, Kashiwazaki, as well as Vial, Albertini, Janicot, Gibert, and others made important contributions that were extremely useful to teachers and the many French champions who were able to gain an international reputation in ground fighting.

In an article published in the federal journal in the early 1980s, Pierre Albertini attempted to theorize the new approach. The concrete proposals he presented concerned *ne waza*, but the concept he defended applied to the teaching of judo in general. The author wrote

What is the most commonly used training and practice task in judo? Is there a connection between performing holds or combinations with a willing partner and mastering opposition, i.e., an opponent in a real sporting situation, or more generally in a situation of aggression? Not asking these questions or not answering them means deliberately choosing a well-trodden path, one that is certainly rich in multiple techniques and varied opposition games, but one that often remains obscure to the novice due to the difficulty of finding simple and understandable instructions.



« Pour une pratique et une pédagogie de l'opposition »

On the other hand, answering these questions already involves embarking on a new process of analysis: -it means recognizing the pair as a privileged situation for study and practice, -it also means recognizing that the main and therefore priority difficulty lies in the resistance offered by the other, the partner-adversary, and not in the execution of a hold (it is easy to perform uchi-mata on a willing uke, but this is not the case in a real situation...), -in the absence of a more objective situation, it means accepting that high-level sports competition is the test that offers the most sophisticated degree of difficulty and, as a corollary, that mastery of this level makes it easier to solve situations of lesser difficulty. Finally, it means choosing a more dialectical approach to

judo by specifying the steps that can lead beginners to high-level practice. From this perspective, the pair in opposition, as defined by sporting rules, is the subject of study and constitutes the reference system [...] In this pair in real opposition, movement is no longer considered a 'goal' but a 'means' of solving the problem posed by the resistance of the partner-opponent.⁴⁰

³⁹ Alain Valin, *Judo au sol, méthode pratique de combat au sol, la position inférieure*, Paris, Judo International, s.d. [1953].

⁴⁰ Pierre Albertini, « Pour une pratique et une pédagogie de l'opposition », *Revue Judo*, n° 59 décembre 1983, p. 37-39, et n° 61 mars avril 1984, p. 41-44.

TEACHING JUDO TACTICS

The French method of teaching judo-jujitsu from 1990 follows a similar reformist approach. Didier Janicot, director of teaching, clearly explains the problem

It has become commonplace to say that judo brings together two protagonists who interact constantly. This “motor communication” has gradually become an essential part of learning. Stereotypical learning involving a ‘mannequin’ partner who is always compliant and never acts has gradually given way to a more ‘lively’ form of learning, in which the execution of a technical movement only makes sense in relation to the context that gave rise to it. Learning to analyze the context of the opposition and act appropriately has gradually become one of the preferred methods of teaching. Judo is not seen as a ‘product’ consisting of X techniques (to be learned) but as an ‘activity’ that constantly draws on the intellectual, emotional, and physical resources of those who practice it. It is a continuous back-and-forth between attack and defense that allows the teacher to help their students progress in their understanding and implementation of the essential principles of judo. Taking into account the actions and reactions of the partner/opponent becomes the dominant feature of learning.⁴¹

EVOLUTION DES SITUATIONS D'ETUDE

Blanche à blanche-jaune	JAUNE	JAUNE-ORANGE	ORANGE
	REPRISE DES SITUATIONS PRECEDENTES, PLUS...		
<p>L'action de Uke provoque le déplacement de Uke.</p>	<p>Initiative progressive de Uke qui provoque le déplacement (Uke suit).</p>	<p>Initiative progressive de Uke qui provoque le déplacement (Uke suit).</p>	<p>Initiative progressive de Uke qui provoque le déplacement (Uke suit).</p>

Notes: Ce tableau n'indique pas les situations exclusives d'étude aux différents grades. Il répertorie dans le temps des situations de complexité croissante et précise celles qui peuvent être travaillées de façon plus approfondie à certains des grades.

Evolution des formes de corps

■ Classification des techniques en NAGE-WAZA
27 techniques de projection ont été retenues pour constituer le programme d'enseignement de la ceinture blanche à la ceinture verte.
Il n'est évidemment pas possible que chaque élève puisse avoir une connaissance détaillée d'un nombre aussi important de techniques.
Le programme est composé d'un ensemble de techniques, regroupées par familles, à partir desquelles chaque élève pourra constituer progressivement son jûdo personnel et efficace.

8 familles sont constituées. Ce regroupement ne constitue pas une classification rigoureuse. Il ne veut être simplement un outil de facilitation pédagogique.
Les 5 premières familles du tableau ci-joint sont constituées à partir de la position globale de l'oeil au moment de la projection, sans prise en compte des actions de Tai qui provoquent la chute (échappage, renversement...)
Nous avons des armées, au-delà de cette première catégorisation, à distinguer 3 autres familles qui sont organisées autour des notions qui provoquent la chute et qui se traduisent par une efficacité spécifique pour Tai.

14

For the first time, a progression of tactical sequences defined as “any phase of opposition or study in which offensive and defensive actions follow one another” is associated, in tabular form, with grade levels ranging from white belt to green belt. Although it is regrettable that this approach was not followed through with the full implementation of a belt-based program which, in the words of Pierre Albertini, specifies “the stages likely to lead beginners to high-level practice,” the teaching issues raised by Didier Janicot represent a definite step forward in terms of didactic and pedagogical thinking about the teaching of judo.

As already mentioned, the *French Progression of Judo-Jujitsu Teaching* published in 2019, although announced as a method, is more of a descriptive technical manual. Like a catalog of exercises whose quality is not in question, the text remains outside the realm of didactic reflection. It is also regrettable that there is no precise and in-depth definition of the levels of expertise and the means to be implemented to achieve them. Focusing on a collection of detailed theoretical knowledge, the content overlooks the principles and rules of action that students must learn in order to, as Henri Courtine pointed out, “fully embrace” the reality of competitive judo. Although judo is defined as a powerful vehicle for education, the book is surprisingly discreet about the type of cultural knowledge that can be acquired.

Méthode française d'enseignement du judo-jujitsu

NAGE-WAZA

Donneries : application de l'attaque et du contrôle dans les actions offensives.

Les situations d'étude :
Travail technique à partir de l'ensemble des situations d'étude.
• Uke avance en poussant • Uke recule en tirant • Tai tire et recule, Uke le suit •
• Tai tire et recule, Uke recule •
• Uke coupe en distance latéralement à droite ou à gauche •
• Uke coupe latéralement vers la droite ou vers la gauche •

Les techniques au programme
Présentation de l'étude des différents groupes techniques

Initiation à :

TSURI-KOMI-GOSHI SOKE-TSURI-KOMI-GOSHI UCHI-MATA TANI-OTOSHI

— Etude d'un contre —

Les séquences tactiques
• Perfectionnement de la défense par attaque et initiation à la défense par blocage.

61

⁴¹ FFJDA, *Méthode française d'enseignement du judo-jujitsu*, Paris, 1990, p. 11.

	Jeux olympiques	Monde seniors	Monde juniors	Monde cadets
Shirine Boukii				
Amandine Buchard				
Sarah-Léonie Cysique				
Clarisse Agbégénou				
Margaux Pinot				
Madeleine Malonga				
Romane Dicko				
Luka Mkheidze				
Kilian Le Blouch				
Guillaume Chainé				
Axel Clerget				
Alexandre Iddir				
Teddy Riner				

Medals of the members of the French Olympic team in Tokyo

France's lag is obvious. In addition to the unfinished work, there has been a return to an abbreviated and reductive technical formalism coexisting with utilitarianism inspired by the evolution of competitive judo. The existence in several regions of France of a ranking list for young children and minors is a direct incentive to seek quick and relative effectiveness. This is a fundamental misinterpretation in a discipline that matures late. Japanese leaders have understood this well and have abolished the national championship for the youngest competitors.⁴² The controversy that followed, however, has in no way affected the performance level of the members of the Japanese national team. While everyone can applaud the high-level analysis and technical and tactical innovations

that result from the constant increase in the level of competition, it is clear to everyone that elite judo can only be built on a foundation of controlled and comprehensive experience of opposition, which is the only guarantee of further progress.

5.5

TEACHING AND LEARNING HOW TO FIGHT

Many observers of departmental and regional competitions are concerned about the technical level of today's young fighters. The same is true of students studying judo at sports colleges, whose technical knowledge is often limited to the moves they practice in training centers. The FFJ, for historical reasons of protectionism, has always remained in competition with schools and universities. Only primary schools and their potential for new members have been targeted. Apart from Robert Boulat in the 1960s and 1970s, middle schools and high schools have rarely been considered. This is still the case today.

When in France, as in many countries, schools set the acquisition of a “foundation of knowledge, skills, and culture” as the goal for the end of schooling, judo in the content of the black belt exam maintains its

⁴² The first Coupe de France Minimes (French Cup for Minimes) was organized in 1968 and the first Grand Prix Benjamins (Grand Prix for Benjamins) in 1971. The experiment lasted only a few years, and French officials at the time quickly abolished these national competitions due to the extreme demands that some coaches placed on their young athletes and the limited impact that these championships had on the selection of future elite athletes. Several internal warnings were not enough to prevent the return of a French Minimes Cup in 2017.

preference for extensive, theoretical, and formal knowledge of technical skills.⁴³ As previously mentioned, national physical education and sports programs have been drafted in terms of knowledge and skills. The content specific to judo targeted three levels that can reasonably be linked to the yellow belt, green belt, and blue belt, or even brown belt for the best students. The main difference between school and club settings lies in the number of teaching hours, not in the quality of the content taught. While it is true that STAPS students receive very little training in judo, there are many PE teachers who have real experience. Many of them are high-ranking practitioners. It is regrettable that they have long been ignored or neglected by the federal authorities.

Inspired by scientific advances in teaching and motor skills learning, the 1996 curriculum outlines the different areas of knowledge associated with the practice. The accompanying documents associated with the curriculum propose learning content. A detailed presentation is also provided in the book *Enseigner des activités physiques scolaires (Teaching Physical Activities in Schools)*.⁴⁴ Certain combat sports such as educational boxing and savate boxing have benefited greatly from the work carried out by the GTD. However, this has not been the case for judo. Despite concrete proposals, the didactic reflection on concepts related to “knowing how to fight,” “knowing how to throw,” “knowing how to immobilize,” or “knowing how to continue the offensive”—at the heart of theoretical analyses—was too out of step with the practices and expectations of the federal community to receive special attention.

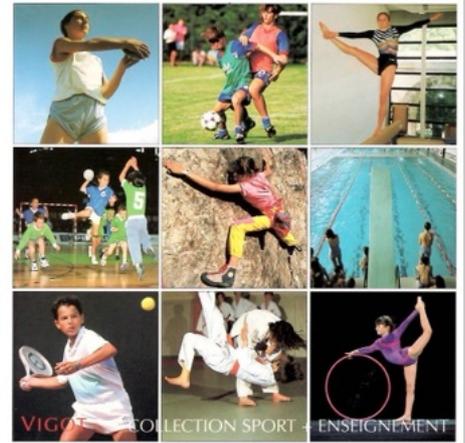
Reassured by the classicism of the analytical approach, many teachers continue to demonstrate and their students continue to execute. Few experiment with new strategies that research has proven to be effective. Examples include problem-solving approaches, pair teaching, and taking into account the concept of task difficulty. The only area in which scientific research has aroused teachers' curiosity is related to performance and training physiology.

In judo, unlike all other competitive sports, which have undergone a major rethink and overhaul of their teaching methods in recent decades, didactic reflection has never been given much consideration. The reasons for this are primarily related to the desire for immediate application with a view to sporting profitability. This weakness has little impact on the convictions of certain teachers and coaches. It reveals the inertia of a culturally dependent system. Despite the vagueness and ambiguity of the definition of “ritualized exercises” in judo, their Japanese origin seems to guarantee maximum effectiveness. Few teachers (and coaches) regularly correct uchi komi practice and offer advice during randori. The application exercises proposed by the various “methods” are treated in a generic manner that seems to be based on permanent evidence and consensus. The lack of correlation between the method of implementation, the level of execution, the objectives to be achieved, and, above all, compliance with the criteria for success and the absence of correction are of little importance. As an example of the prevailing vagueness, the terms *yaku soku*

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D. Maillard / M. Rodriguez / F. Seners / F. Vacher



Enseigner des activités physiques scolaires

⁴³ The report by the French Judo Academy on this subject is available for consultation. *Judo grading, report by the French Academy of Judo*, written by Michel Brousse, 2024. Available on the France-Judo website or at <https://michelbrousse.fr/>.

⁴⁴ Michel Brousse, « Le Judo à l'école », Patrick Seners, directed by, *Enseigner les APS*, Paris : Vigot, 1997, p. 173-194.



Randori, Lernen & unterrichten, ein praxishandbuch

geiko and *kakari geiko*, although official in France, are only exercises whose definition and use do not reflect a unanimous point of view in Japan.⁴⁵

While in team sports, teachers have a wide range of teaching methods at their disposal to vary the balance of power between attack and defense by exploiting concepts such as numerical superiority, movement zones, space, and time, judo teachers only have generic definitions that are not correlated with progress objectives in terms of how to overcome adversity. Only a few rare publications or articles examine the advantages, limitations, and methods of execution of *tandoku renshu*, *uchi komi*, *nage komi*, or *randori*.⁴⁶ Their educational use is even less frequently specified.

True “magical tasks,” the exercises used in judo, are supposed to provide all the conditions necessary for students to learn and progress. As a result, the teacher's expertise becomes the decisive factor in preventing students from being left to their own devices. It is up to the teacher to give precise instructions and monitor progress rigorously, to check implementation, and verify results. There is no official method to assist them.

Keen to empower students to take charge of their own progress, Jennifer Goldschmidt and Ralf Lippmann published an innovative text in 2011, based on university research: *Randori, Lernen & unterrichten, ein praxishandbuch*.⁴⁷ The message is clear. Learning through *randori* requires a pedagogical approach based on identified and prioritized themes, performance criteria, and evaluation criteria. It is worth noting that a large judo federation such as the German federation relies on academic research for the training of its teachers. Only time will tell whether this is an example or an exception.

5.6

⁴⁵ In Japan, many teachers consider *uchi komi* to be part of *kakari geiko*.

⁴⁶ However, we should mention the publication by the FFJDA research department, which offers valuable insights into these topics. FFJDA, Research Department, *Le judo des 15-17 ans, pratique et entraînement* (Judo for 15-17 year olds, practice and training), Paris, FFJDA, 1985, 186 p.

⁴⁷ Jennifer Goldschmidt, Ralf Lippmann, *Randori, Lernen & unterrichten, ein praxishandbuch*, Aachen, Meyer and Meyer, 2011 (2016), 128 p.

TEACHING JUDOKAS OR COACHING COMPETITORS?

At this stage of our reflection, what answers can we provide to the definition of tactics in judo and the prioritization of teaching content for learning purposes from beginner to advanced levels? The constant evolution of judo is driven by the combined influence of the professionalism of athletes who devote much of their daily lives to optimizing their performance, and constant technical and tactical innovation within a sporting framework that is often more reactive and hesitant than forward-thinking. This has led to the emergence of new forms of throws such as the reverse *morote seoi nage*, the combination of *kata guruma* and *yoko otoshi*, and *sumi gaeshi* combined with *uki waza*, to name but a few examples, some of which were quickly condemned by refereeing rules that have sometimes evolved in curious ways.

Due to the disappearance of standing *kansetsu waza*, grips that primarily support more traditional judo have been replaced by pulling grips, which have fundamentally changed fighting distances. Yesterday distant or intermediate, and today more frequently in close combat, the variation in the type of relationship with the opponent's body has opened up rich perspectives that have brought new tactical solutions. The synthesis of offensive pursuit patterns, initially built on an algorithmic model of the if...then...else... type, is still based on the opponent's reaction in the very classic trilogy of action-reaction-action. What has changed are the parameters of variability, which, in addition to the above elements, now include not only the timing of the defense in relation to the attack, ranging from anticipation (formerly translated as confusion) to avoiding the fall and the standing-ground connection, but also the direction, not only in a plane but in space (front, back, right, left, up, and down). This can be clearly seen in the new changes of direction (forward then sideways) favored by certain exceptional fighters. Tactical contributions can also be seen in the combinations of actions implemented by those who effectively combine attack heights to deceive their opponent's vigilance (double attack followed by a kneeling technique or, more recently, *o uchi gari* with the knee of the supporting leg on the ground). The most decisive areas, grips, and continuity on the ground, are undoubtedly the most explored. They are most often the subject of original and innovative solutions. The narrowing of the gap between elite competitors means that the difference is no longer made by the quality of the initial move, but rather by the complexity and effectiveness of the tactical patterns developed.

Danny Hicks' series of books, *Superstarjudo's Guide to Throwing for Ippon*, is an excellent illustration of the thought and adaptation to the specific conditions of competition, the diversity of opponents, and the evolution of rules that the best athletes on the international circuit engage in.⁴⁸ Inoue, Suzuki, Koga alongside Décosse, Harrison, Liparteliani, Huizinga, Bischof, Khashbaatar, and many others demonstrate that their exceptional performances are the result of constant research that exploits the principles and rules of action in new ways. But what the world's judo elite have in common is a perfect mastery of the technical basics of the discipline, a mastery that provides a solid foundation on which to build the necessary adaptations. A French edition of the 27 volumes that I had the privilege of translating is currently in production.

The training of judokas, *i.e.*, the simultaneous development of mastery of throwing techniques and tactical awareness, must precede the training of competitors and the pursuit of immediate effectiveness.

The future of judo depends on this, both in terms of its popularity as a spectator sport and the interest it generates among enthusiasts. The appeal for spectators lies in mastered technical actions that set bodies in

⁴⁸ Danny Hicks, *Superstarjudo's Guide to Throwing for Ippon*, s.l., Fighting Films-Ippon Books, 2022.



Throwing for Ippon. The Throw

motion and reveal the precision, relevance, and beauty of the movements. Only an open and offensive style of judo can sustain collective enthusiasm. Observations from the recent Cadet World Championships in Sarajevo are cause for concern for many observers.

Kumi kata battles, immediate grips at the end of the sleeve, crossed guards, systematic groundwork, and use of refereeing to penalize opponents are all areas that demonstrate the logic followed by coaches in charge of the new generations. Statistics show a decline in the frequency of *uchi mata*, *seoi nage*, and other *o soto gari* in favor of new forms of *kata guruma* and *sumi gaeshi*. The attentive observer will notice both the automated attempts at *juji gatame*, *sankaku*, and *shime*, as well as the ignorance of the basic movements necessary for immobilization releases. There is therefore good reason to fear that the margin for progress for these “mini-seniors” lies mainly in the areas of physical fitness and mental preparation.

Shouldn't the leaders of the International Judo Federation consider the issue of appropriate and forward-looking regulations? In particular, the goal of immediate results requires mastery of submission techniques, which must be learned early in adolescence, making their practice very dangerous both physically and

psychologically. The ban on leg attacks is a radical decision that the IJF took in the interests of the sport as a spectacle. Could we not consider removing submission techniques for the cadet category in the interests of the health of young competitors? The question of the influence of the high-level model remains unanswered. Studies show that there is no significant correlation between podium finishes at the Cadet World Championships and those at the Olympic Games. The Japanese federation's decision, which is certainly unpopular but courageous, is in line with this. In judo, early detection is a political mistake. It has no impact on the level of excellence in the senior category. On the other hand, the same cannot be said for the financial and, above all, human costs that systematically result from intensive and ill-advised training of the youngest athletes.

6.

CONCLUSION

It is not the purpose of this text to propose a method for developing “fighting skills” in judo.⁴⁹ Learning tactical sequences is a reality that many teachers are aware of and address with individual solutions that are effective but not widely shared. The aim was therefore not to denounce a shortcoming, but rather to call for collective reflection which, while remaining faithful to the heritage and educational principles of the discipline, is based more on a motor and intellectual mastery of confrontation that is gradually built up and directly linked to the reality of opposition.

Let us remember that the federal institution holds the right to award grades in judo. This concerns the grades of *yudansha* (black belt degrees) but also those of *mudansha* (colored belts). There is a delegation of authority that allows certified and recognized teachers to award *kyu* grades. In *Judo for Young Men*, Tadao Otaki and Donn Draeger describe the “Japanese” methods that have shaped grading examinations in many countries:

*A Judo examination is usually conducted in three stages. In the first one, the candidate is required to demonstrate such fundamentals as falling, moving, and grappling techniques, and other technical knowledge. The second stage of examination is the actual context. Here the candidate is given the chance to demonstrate his application of technical knowledge in sporting competition. Finally, the candidate may be asked questions or may be required to write about the origin and history of judo, judo terms, and other technical questions concerning Judo.*⁵⁰

Considering the importance of grading exams, both for young students and their parents and loved ones, but also from the more general perspective of harmonizing belt levels and the image and quality of French judo, one can only hope that national guidelines will be established. It seems, in fact, that there are significant disparities in the ways teachers proceed.

The content taught and the assessment methods used provide insight into the objectives pursued by teachers and, consequently, into the collective goals assigned to the discipline. When Jigoro Kano opened the Kodokan school, he was not acting out of nostalgia. Resolutely forward-looking, the founder of judo did not hesitate to call on modernity and science to rebuild the teaching of the classical forms of combat he had studied. He adapted the teaching method to the cultural and social context of his time. The innovation represented by the Kodokan school demonstrated its intention to prepare Japanese youth for a new era synonymous with profound change. Should we, therefore, consider it a guilty transgression to use current scientific advances to perpetuate the teaching of an activity whose educational value everyone is convinced of, while being aware of the need to bring teaching models closer to the changing expectations and motivations of practitioners? Does judo today serve to prepare French youth for the changes in 21st-century society?

⁴⁹ I have made proposals on this subject at conferences in France, the United States, Croatia, and Japan.

⁵⁰ Tadao Otaki, Donn Draeger, *Judo for Young Men, An Intercholastic and Intercollegiate Standard*, Tokyo, Kodansha, Ltd. 1965, p.44

These questions are not a negative assessment of developments. They express a personal reflection on the need to think about the future of judo, its practice for all, and its teaching. In history, criticism is a method of examination that aims to analyze a subject and interpret it as objectively as possible. Of course, the analysis remains personal, but it is based on facts, archives, and a corpus that is precisely referenced and accessible to everyone. The comments made here are not value judgments. They refer to a reasoned argument. They are an incentive to continue the process, to open debates in order to involve the new generations who, with their wealth of different experiences, will be the ones to ensure the continuity of the practice for the greatest number of people.

To this end, I would like to emphasize the importance of leaving a written record. Oral transmission in judo is incomparably rich. However, it faces two obstacles. On the one hand, it requires the presence of a skilled speaker, which is often uncertain, and on the other hand, the experience of the elders is often lost, rarely preserved, and poorly transmitted. The initial classicism of judo teaching preserved, in a way that was sometimes excessive, the cultural and technical heritage of the activity. Nowadays, the movements of the elite are constantly being renewed under the influence of refereeing rules. Sport judo does not neglect the memory of techniques, but it ignores and forgets anything that falls outside the scope of immediate efficiency. When the champion replaces the master, the sacred slips into the profane.

Judo is a beautiful idea put into action. It forges character, shapes consciousness, and determines life trajectories. We must preserve it so that we can pass it on and it can continue to offer what we have received. To this end, I echo the words of Henri Bergson when he said that *“the judo of tomorrow is not what will happen, but what we will make of it.”*⁵¹



⁵¹ « *L'avenir n'est pas ce qui va arriver mais ce que nous allons en faire* », Henri Bergson, French philosopher, Nobel Prize in Literature, 1927.

7

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Saint-Émilion



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Kodokan



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Kyoto



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Order of the Rising Sun



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8

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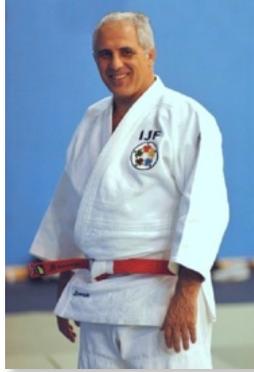
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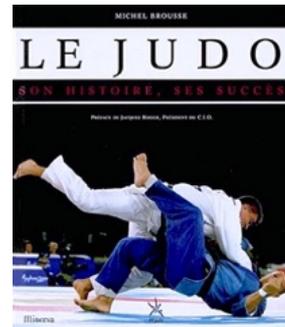
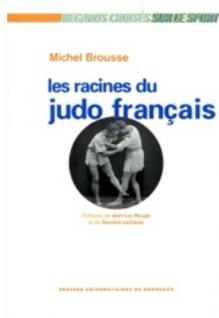
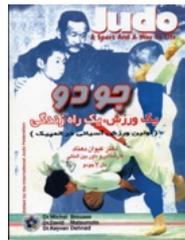
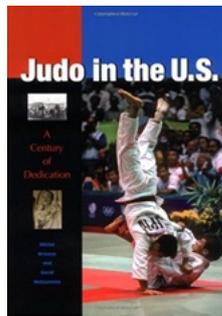
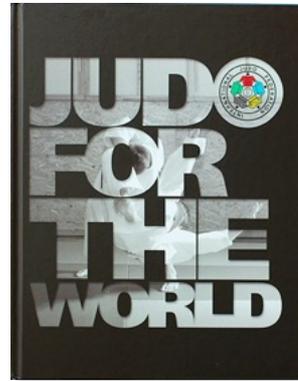
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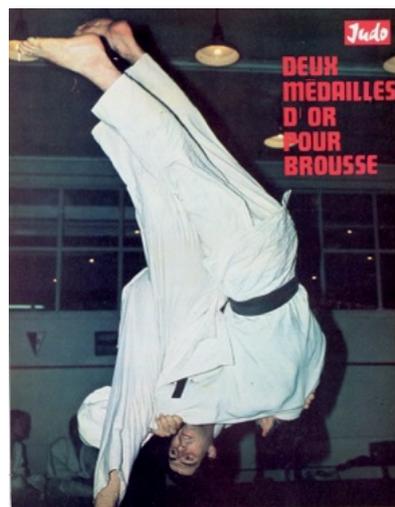
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« Haku Michigami », Maison des sports, Talence, 2022.

International Judo Federation

5th World Conference of the IJF and research symposium, Rio de Janeiro, 2007.

4th World Conference of the IJF and research symposium, Osaka, 2005.

3rd World Conference of the IJF and research symposium, Cairo, 2003.

2nd World Conference of the IJF and research symposium, Munich, 2001.

1st World Conference of the IJF and research symposium, Birmingham 1999.

CONFERENCES (SPEAKER)

European Judo Union, national federations, universities (invitations)

France, Spain, Portugal, Malta, Great Britain, Belgium, Switzerland, Germany, Morocco, Croatia, Italy, Brazil, Canada, United States, Korea, Japan.

A total of more than 170 conferences on the subject of judo.

Main results

European Espoir Champion, Berlin, 1969 (-85 kg)

European Junior Champion, Bordeaux, 1970 (-80 kg)

European Junior Champion, Naples, 1971 (-80 kg)

Member of the French team in Japan in 1970 and 1974

Military World Champion, Rio de Janeiro, 1974 (-93 kg and all categories)

World University Vice-Champion, Rio de Janeiro, 1978 (team)

3rd French National Senior Championships, 1973 (-93 kg)

Winner of the International Tournament in Pécs, Hungary, 1977, (-86 kg)

3rd Paris Tournament, 1979 (-86 kg)

50 international selections (1969-1981)



Naples



Royan



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