

<Introduction about France>

For Kendo France is the biggest country in Europe, because the Kendo population is 9,000 and there are about 7 Kendo Club on the outskirts of Paris, which is enough for people to practice every day.

In the European Match held in Germany 2010 French showed their power as follows.

Men's team got 1st prize, men's individual 2nd, women's team 2nd, junior team 1st, and junior individual 1st prize.

In France there Master Kenichi Yoshimura who got 8th grade for the first time outside of Japan and has made great efforts to popularize Kendo till now from 1970 as an adviser of France Kendo Federation.

When he was a student of Tokyo University, Master Kouzou Takizawa, at that time instructor of Tokyo University Kendo Club, asked students whether someone speak French, and Master Takizawa delegated Mr. Yoshimura to France as a first student Kendo instructor.

It was the latter half of 1950s that people started to practice Kendo in France, and Kendo progressed as follows.

In 1972: France Kendo Federation made a start with 400 members.

In 1980: The number of member reached 1,400.

In 1982: Master Kouzou /Kenji Takizawa visited Paris with 10 other Japanese to have 5days session.

In 1985: The 5th World Kendo Champion ship was held in Paris

In 1989: From Atsugui 5 men and women Kenshi visited Paris to practice with French Kenshi.

In 1990: The number of member reached 1,900.

In 1994: The 8th World Kendo Champion ship was held in Paris

In 1998: The 1st Paris Match as held. Matsuda being stationed in France took part in it.

In 2001: 2nd Paris Match was held. Chairman Takizawa visited there to do an exhibition game by Kenshi 8th grade.

Later once a 3 or 4 years it was held and some Kenshi from Atsugi participated in it.

40 years have passed since French people started to practice Kendo.

Kendo spread steadily in France and we can see the same training scene of children in France as that in Japan. They are Kenshi with blue eyes. They will be good rival for Japanese Kenshi without fail in World Champion ships if their supple style of Kendo and physical ability are fused.

It is not too much to say that French people begin with Kendo Shape. Beginners also like to begin with learning Shape. I guess that they learn Kendo correctly appreciating different culture.

Every year instructors with 7th or 8th grade are sent to France for a half year to give lessons in various area. Members of Kendo Club in each area of France came to pick them (instructors) from distance and do practice at training camp. It is called "Stage". They certainly enjoy Kendo as a part of life.

We Japanese living in France have lots of opportunity to learn how to enjoy Kendo and life from them.

Kendo French Open is held in Feb. every year.

Let's take part in it to deepen Kendo friend ship each other.



(Written by Morikatsu Matsuda, Liaison Department of Atsugi Kendo Federation)