

Professor of ENSA Mr. Jean Coudray coming to Japan

Text by Takeshi NAGANO(AGS-J)

Mr. Jean Coudray, Professor of ENSA has visited Japan.

ENSA? That isn't NASA, is it? Has something been taught there

What country is that located? Almost all Japanese might have few knowledge about ENSA.

Ecole Nationale Ski et Alpinisme in France is called ENSA for short. Though it is a school, the education of mountaineering hasn't been given for the general public. One of ENSA's most important task is to grow the professional guides.

Mountain Guide is a profession, but Japanese don't have enough appreciation about Guide.

(We Japanese have several steep mountains in our country, but so many mountains don't require the rock-climbing technique, or the glaciers and ice technique. Hill walking is very popular in Japan, so far.)

In Europe to be a Guide is very hard. The examination of Guide is for the man who has very enough intelligence, knowledge, judgment, technique and physical toughness. And few members who passed the difficulty of the exam can be Guides. So, in Europe, Guides are looked up to and respected.

"Children in Grindelward are playing at Guides." This is a part of Japanese famous novelist Jiro Nitta's classic "The Valleys And the Villages in the Alps." The image of the Guide, as a profession, is something similar to astronaut, I think. To be a Guide in Chamonix, there are severe training and examinations. The process of those courses are sometimes introduced to Japanese people for example, by Kazuhide Saito and Yuji Emoto.

If you take part in the days of training for the Guide, you must do your best. At the moment the activities begin, you face an ultimate choice - "giving up or challenging?" or "Follow the professor or giving up?".

And during the days of training, you have to do your best.

M. Jean COUDRAY has been a professor of l'ENSA for more than thirty years. And the experience of his Himalayan mountains exceeds thirty times. Pr. Coudray was invited to Japan in October, as the representative of France, to "The World Mountain Resort And Gateway cities conference 2001" (Which was held at Matsumoto city, Nagano pref.).

Alpine Guide society of Japan, called AGS J for short, has sent Guides Japonais to Chamonix to learn the technique of the Guide since five years ago. So AGS J makes friends with l'ENSA. So far about 20 members of AGS J has learned the technique of the Guide at l'ENSA. According to such relationships, AGS J could help to realize the professor's dream of a long time - "Climbing

the Japanese Alps."

We invited Pr. Coudray to Mt.Tanigawa-dake and Mt.Ogawayama in mid-October.One of the leading alpinist of France, Jean-COUDRAY, what he saw and felt through the activities in Japanese mountains follows.

Un voyage de Pr. Coudray pour Mt.Tanigawa-dake

*- Text by Atsushi KATSUNO
director of AGS-J -*

On the evening of October 10th, Pr. Coudray had a banquet with the friends of Japan - also with M.Hitoshi-KONDO,the emeritus professor of WASEDA-university.

Next morning,we started for Mt.Tanigawa-dake.The longing for climbing was of climax.In addition to that,the hosts are such professional guides being very familiar to Mt.Tanigawa-dake as Syomi-SUZUKI,Haruyuki-ENDO.The dream has been realized here.

Started from the hotel in Tokyo by a car,soon on a express way. Being involved in a traffic jam,we couldn't reach another express way to Mt,Tanigawa-dake easily."Where are we ?"asked the Ph,and the answers were always"We are still in Tokyo."After all,through the Kan-etu express way,at full speed,we arrived.At first,it seemed better that we should see the whole view of Itinokura-sawa, that is,so to say," Le premier forteresse ". Huge rock-walls surround around the valley and it is about 2km of size in diameter.

(Hundreds of routes have been established and very famous as the site of alpinism. The first ascent of une voie named"The Grand Icicle "is regarded as a mythe of alpinism in Japan.Of course non-repetee,about 300m of height,5~10cm in thickness and almost vertical.Even if that might take the form of ,no sooner breaks up than be sunlit.It had been attempted many times by the leading alpinists in Japan.Finally the first ascent was made in January 1982. And it has enhanced the reputation of the names - Atsushi-KATSUNO and Toshiyuki-Kikuchi -.Now both of them are the members of AGS-J ... by author.)

There was a famous alpinist from Europe who took a glance at the Itinokura-sawa,and said "It's impossible to climb."I apprehended that Pr. Coudray might say the same thing.In that case,we would go on a sightseeing of mountains colored with autumn

red-leaves. I considered which mountains we should visit. Mt. Fuji, or so. In this season there aren't any snow mountains that will satisfy our hopes. So I decided to invite Ph. to Mt. Tanigawa-dake for alpine climbing and Mt. Ogawayama for free climbing.

At 13:00, on arriving in front of the valley, we were overpowered with numbers of the tourists. "KATSUNO! let's go!" said Ph. "No, we'll go tomorrow morning!", I said. And Ph. said "OK. But a little, let's go now!" So we had a small activity - of course, without climbing rope.

At below a cascade, we observed around and I explained the route which we would climb the next day. Then Ph. said, "Good! Good rock!" The words delighted me. On the way back to the lodge, we dropped into the mountaineering support center. To hear the number of accidents, Ph. was so surprised, no words some-while and told, "Alas, Why?"

We went up to The Tenjin-Pass. By the rope-way, Ph. admired the color of the mountains with red leaves in autumn. So, leaves in Chamonix become not red but yellow, Their brightness were outstanding. Along through rope-way and lift, we stood at Tenjin-Pass. The autumn mountains were, - for me, so familiar with them - wonderful as I expected.

"KATSUNO, you like to go down by the lift, and I'll be running down!"

said Ph.. Ph. is also a professor of expert skiing of l'ENSA and was eager to go down along a course of skiing.

In the evening two Guides Japonais - M. Syomi SUZUKI and M. Haruyuki ENDO - ran to meet us to the lodge.

At 6:37 in the morning on 12th, we left the entrance of the valley. Climbing up beside the cascade, and along the Tale-ridge of "Arete-central" at awesome speed. That is because Ph. knew that another Guide Japonais M. Masanori HOSHINA and client were proceeding in advance. Catching up with and appreciated the friendship since the training at l'ENSA in Chamonix.

At 8:30 we started to climb "Arete-sud du Ebosi-iwa". Today Ph. is a guest, so led by M. SUZUKI, we followed. At 9:40 we finished the climb.

Descending the same route, then M. ENDO, finished another route's guide, also came down. We descended the Tale-ridge together.

We thanked to good weather and red-leaved mountain, and a calm day gave us wonderful activities. Climbing is so different from that of in Chamonix, it should be impressive. About Mt. Tanigawadake, Ph. said, "Wonderful mountains. The nature has kept as it was 200~300 years ago." The alpinists from other countries often points out that rocks are too rotten, dangerous. But for Ph., it seemed rather comfortable. Ph. looked at the walls with a pair of binocular for long-while, and it was so impressive. After descending, we enjoyed an open-air hot spring bath, and left for the next destination-Mt. Ogawayama to enjoy freeclimbing.

Ph.Jean-COUDRAY's impressions about the mountains in Japan

By

Takeshi-NAGANO On October 13th,the next day we visited Mt.Tanigawadake (means tani-for a valley,gawa-for a river,dake-for a Mt.),Ph.enjoyed rock climbing with the pupils of mountaineering school at AGS-J.Ph.inspected the direction to the pupils by M.Shimada and led a slab route himself.Enjoyed warm conversation,and that calmed everybody. Ph.gave us jokes and proper technical advices. "Liberty,Equality,Humanity"- Pr. Coudray,the spirit of France itself, made us so happy.After,we moved to Hatimann-gorge,we-Ph.,M.KATSUNO and I - climbed a 4-pitches route,It seemed that Ph.was very pleased with the rock in Mt.Ogawayama(ogawa means a creek.) and enjoyed climbing comfortably. After we returned to Iwane-hotel,I interviewed about the impressions of Japanese mountains.Fortunately Ph.granted them friendly. "My first impression is about the beautiful color of mountains in autumn.The next is that so many large and various mountains about 2000m are around here.While I looked the mountains,I found many possibilities - mountaineering,climbing,skiing,and mountain-skiing." "The first place I visited was Kamikoti(means a high-land) ,I visited there at a tour of inspection.So I didn't climbed there,But the mountains was so attractive,much more ,imagining them as in winter." "Mt.Tanigawadake was a so wild mountain.And the nature has been kept as being original.They aren't damaged.For the people who loves the nature,the mountains in Japan is so wonderful,I think." — Ph.gave a speech about a proposition that is how to keep the balance between tourism and keeping environment at above-mentioned conference.- "I appreciate the kindness of Guides Japonais and Japanese climbers.Climbing has been fun,of course,and hosts are friendly.Some climbing routes are dangerous,so they seem to require sophisticated techniques.Various routes of difficulty ,aren't there?" " I realized why the Japanese climbers can enjoy a lot of activities in Europe. People in Europe regard Japan as a perfectly flat country! The mountains in Japan do us well for learning the techniques of mountaineering and skiing.Winter-summer,training in each season will be good experiences for The Europe Alps and Himalayan mountains." "About Mt.Tanigawadake,the legendary ascent of "The Grand Icicle" was so impressive.That's a mythe.In Europe, Chamonix Yard,it seems to be for the North-face of Grandes-Jorasses.It is the most typical certification of the spirits of Japanese climbers - A Big Record - and a exploit. Also in terms of the possibility,that is ,so to say,a certification how far the good and strong spirits could go." "Next time I'd like to visit Japan in winter.And then I want to enjoy snow-mixed climbing and skiing fully." Pr. Coudray gave us the impression of Japan smilly.As for the exceptional record of climbing,Ph.'s eyes got to be sharpened and brightened and showed special interests.It was so impressive for us. At next Ph's visit to Japan,we'll be able

to be present with Ph's activities - skiing, snow-mixed climbing - That makes us impassioned. Really a friend of Japan, Ph. was always thankful to us for everything. We tried to have a leading Guide-alpinist of France understand the nature and mountaineering of today, in Japan. Now, I can say, we -Japanese Guides, alpinists and mountaineers - have gained over a best teacher from l'ENSA, which is, needless to say, a great educational institution of mountaineering. We are looking forward to be advised and understood. Last of all, the beginners have been involved in accidents for many times, and here is an advice from Ph. Jean-COUDRAY. " Step by step exactly." This is not only for beginners, but also for us AGS-J, as the base of teaching mountaineering and a educational institution of the Guides. AGS-J will learn the method of teaching mountaineering from all over the world, it should be also very "step by step exactly". And we AGS-J have to introduce each of them exactly to every mountaineer and the mountaineering world of Japan. We believe the Ph.'s advice to be such an encouragement. - end -