

= Yamashita Yoshiaki =

Yamashita Yoshitsugu (山手 義久 , 16 February 1865 ? 26 October 1935 , also known as Yamashita Yoshiaki) , was the first person to have been awarded 10th degree red belt (j?dan) rank in Kodokan judo . He was also a pioneer of judo in the United States .

= = Early years = =

Yamashita was born in Kanazawa , then the capital of the powerful Kaga Domain . His father was of the samurai class . As a boy , Yamashita trained in the traditional (kory?) Japanese martial arts schools of Y?shin @-@ ry? and Tenjin Shin 'y? @-@ ry? jujutsu . In August 1884 , he joined the Kodokan judo dojo of Kano Jigoro (神道 楽 1860 ? 1938) , as its nineteenth member . He advanced to first degree black belt (shodan) rank in three months , fourth degree (yondan) ranking in two years , and sixth degree (rokudan) in fourteen years . He was a member of the Kodokan team that competed with Tokyo Metropolitan Police jujutsu teams during the mid @-@ 1880s , and during the 1890s , his jobs included teaching judo at the Imperial Japanese Naval Academy and Tokyo Imperial University (modern University of Tokyo) .

= = The Four Guardians of K?d?kan = =

When Kan? Jigor? began to develop judo from jiu @-@ jitsu , his efforts were met with fierce opposition from jiu @-@ jitsu practitioners . However , Kano drew a loyal following that included exceptional fighters . Hence the term " Four Guardians of K?d?kan " came into existence , referring to Yamashita Yoshiaki along with Tsunejiro Tomita , Yokoyama Sakujiro , and Saig? Shir? .

= = Introducing judo to America = =

In February 1902 , Seattle @-@ based railroad executive Samuel Hill decided that his 9 @-@ year @-@ old son , James Nathan , should learn judo , which he had apparently seen or heard about while on a business trip to Japan . In Hill 's words , the idea was for the boy to learn " the ideals of the Samurai class , for that class of men is a noble , high @-@ minded class . They look beyond the modern commercial spirit . " Hill spoke to a Japanese American business associate , Masajiyo Furuya , for advice . Furuya referred Hill to Kazuyoshi Shibata , who was a student at Yale University . Shibata told Hill about Yamashita , and on 21 July 1903 , Hill wrote a letter to Yamashita , asking him to come to Seattle at Hill 's expense . On 26 August 1903 , Yamashita replied , writing that he , his wife , and one of his students (Saburo Kawaguchi) would leave for Seattle on 22 September 1903 .

The ship carrying the Yamashita party docked in Seattle on 8 October 1903 . A week later , on 17 October 1903 , Yamashita and Kawaguchi gave a judo exhibition at a Seattle theater that Hill had rented for the evening . Attendance was by invitation only , and guests included Sam Hill 's mother @-@ in @-@ law , Mary Hill (wife of railroader J.J. Hill) , Senator Russell Alger , and assorted Sportswriters . Afterwards , Hill took the Yamashita party east to Washington , D.C. , where Mrs. Hill and young James Nathan were then living . Meanwhile , the favorable publicity surrounding the event caused Japanese Americans living in Seattle to start their own judo club , known as the Seattle Dojo .

Soon after arriving in the District of Columbia , Yamashita visited the Japanese Legation , and in March 1904 , the Japanese naval attaché , Commander Takeshita Isamu , took Yamashita to the White House to meet President Theodore Roosevelt . Roosevelt practiced wrestling and boxing while in the White House , and he had received jujutsu jackets from William Sturgis Bigelow and jujutsu lessons from J. J. O 'Brien , a Philadelphia police officer who had studied jujutsu while living in Nagasaki . Roosevelt was impressed with Yamashita 's skill , and during March and April 1904 , Yamashita gave judo lessons to the President and interested family and staff in a room at the White House . Subsequently , at other locations , Yamashita and his wife Fude gave lessons to prominent

American women , to include Martha Blow Wadsworth (sister of Kindergarten pioneer Susan Blow) , Hallie Elkins (wife of Senator Stephen Benton Elkins) , and Grace Davis Lee (Hallie Elkins ' sister) , and their children .

In January 1905 , Yamashita got a job teaching judo at the U.S. Naval Academy . There were about 25 students in his class , including a future admiral , Robert L. Ghormley . The position ended at the end of the school term , and Yamashita was not rehired for the following year . When President Roosevelt heard of this , he spoke to the Secretary of the Navy , who in turn told the Superintendent of the Naval Academy to rehire Yamashita . Consequently , Yamashita 's judo was taught at the Naval Academy throughout the first six months of 1906 .

= = Later life = =

At the end of the 1906 academic year , Yamashita left the United States for Japan . On 24 July 1906 , he participated in a conference in Kyoto that had been called for the purpose of standardizing judo forms (kata) that could be taught in Japanese public schools .

From the 1910s to the 1930s , Yamashita worked as a judo teacher at Tokyo Higher Normal School (????????? , T?ky? K?t? Shihan Gakk?) . In this capacity , he often attended judo tournaments and exhibitions . He also taught judo to the Tokyo Municipal Police . Thus , from September 1924 to April 1926 , Yamashita was part of a committee that developed a new kata for Japanese police .

An example of Yamashita 's teaching method is the advice :

Yamashita 's last major public appearance was probably the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Kodokan , an event which took place in November 1934 . British judoka Sarah Mayer described Yamashita 's participation as follows :

His ultimate promotion to 10th dan was posthumous .

= = Video footage = =

Koshiki no kata Yoshiaki Yamashita with Jigoro Kano