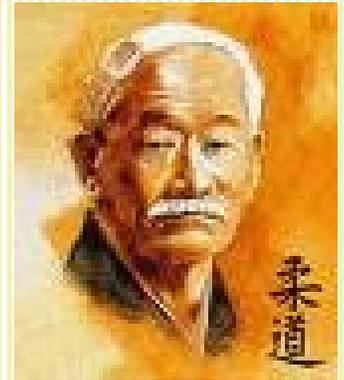


The Judo Compass

July 2013



YAMASHITA YOSHIAKI (1865-1935) Kodokan 10th Dan. The son of a minor samurai he received some martial art training as a youth. In 1884, he became the nineteenth member of JIGORO KANO's KODOKAN. After three months he earned his first DAN ranking at KANO's school. After two years he received his fourth DAN. In 1898, he received sixth DAN. He was a member of the KODOKAN teams that competed against the Tokyo Police JUJUTSU club in 1883 and 1884. He was an excellent instructor. He spoke very good English and wrote beautiful Japanese. In 1903, he went to the USA where he taught JUDO to President T. Roosevelt. JIGORO KANO awarded him the first 10th DAN after his death on October 26, 1935. He was the very first Kodokan 10th Dan. His *Do's and Don'ts in Learning Judo* is as useful and insightful a guide to judo training now as it was in his day.

Set Your Compass to Correct Bearings

Yamashita's first of fourteen suggestions is, *"Study the correct way of applying the throws. Throwing with brute force is not the correct way of winning in judo. The most important point is to win with technique."*

Yamashita was one of the "Four Guardians of the Kodokan". The new Kodokan faced fierce competition and powerful challenges, in an era when the spirit of the samurai was extremely strong, and martial artists were not playful people. The competitions he was in, and which the Kodokan won, were responsible for Kano's judo gaining a foothold, then flourishing. In the face of such competition, his definition of worthwhile winning puts technique ahead of power.

Shiai is the testing ground for your technique. Winning in shiai does not define your judo. You can be a champion and still not be a quality judoka. Come home with any result and the question remains, "Were your skills good?" The answer cannot be, "Of course they were. I won, didn't I?" If you win without skill, you have no reason to be proud. If you lose to someone who does not have skills, but is more powerful, you should not despair or give up on improving technique. If you persist with technique training, you will win against that person or counterpart one day.

The study of the correct way of applying skills is not only a matter of copying what you see and wish for, so much as understanding their simple, elegant, and always elusive underlying principles. This brings you a lifetime opportunity for challenge and improvement.

The *Judo Compass* is conceived, written and sent by Tom Crone. www.northstarjudo.com

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