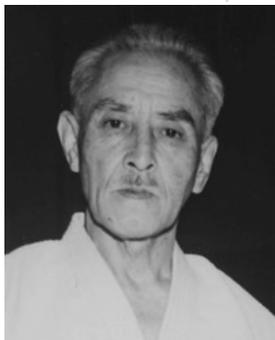


Profiles of Kodokan 10th Dan Holders

10th Degree Black Belt is the highest rank in the Judo world

Mifune, Kyuzo (b1883-d1965)



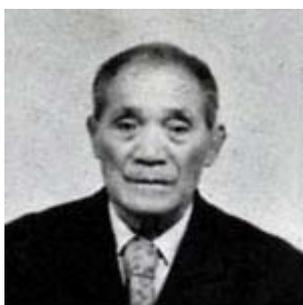
He began Judo at age 13 and joined the Kodokan in 1903. By 1912, he was already a Rokudan (6th Degree black belt) and a Kodokan instructor. He was unbelievably energetic and eventually stood at the head of the Kodokan's instructors. The speed with which he mastered the techniques of Judo can only be matched by the rapidity of his promotion. He received the grade of 10th dan on May 25, 1945, was the second youngest man to be promoted to 10th Dan, and he held his rank nearly 20 years, the longest of any 10th Dan. He was a permanent member of the Kodokan Dojo Consultative Group. He is the author of the Canon of Judo. In 1964 the Japanese Government awarded him the honor of the Order of the Rising Sun. He was the first person ever to be honored this way during his lifetime. Before his death on January 27, 1965 he was the only tenth dan alive in the world.

Iizuka, Kunisaburo (b1875-d1958)



Entered the Kodokan in 1891 and was graded 10th Dan on April 5, 1946. As a young man he was very keen to go abroad but in 1906 was asked to become Judo instructor at Keio (the oldest private University in Japan) and he remained there for more than fifty years, devoting his whole life to the work. He was a member of both the Kodokan Council and the Dojo Consultative Group.

Samura, Kaichiro (b1880-d1964)



One of the two longest living 10th Dans, he joined the Kodokan in 1898 and received the grade of 10th Dan on April 5, 1948. In 1899 he became the head of the Judo Section of the Butokukai and later traveled extensively teaching at schools and police establishments. In 1931 he began teaching at the Kodokan and was a member of the Dojo Consultative Group.

Nagaoka, Hidekazu (b1876-d1952)



Came to Tokyo from his birth place, Okayama at the age of 16 to seek out the Shihan. Entered the Kodokan in 1893 and practised so hard it was said of him, "The technique is Sutemi, the man is Nagaoka." Many of his contests are still the subject of countless reminiscences. All his efforts were poured into the training of young teachers and he was of the greatest assistance to the President of the Kodokan. He did much to gain for the Kodokan the secure position it enjoys today and was promoted 10th Dan on December 27, 1937 by Jigoro Kano, just a few months before Jigoro Kano died. He is one of only three 10th Dans promoted to that rank by the founder of Judo. He and Isogai were the first students of Kano to be promoted to 10th Dan while alive, and he was the youngest man ever to be promoted to 10th dan. He passed away on November 22, 1952.

Yamashita, Yoshitsugu (Yoshiaki) (b1865-d1935)



The Shihan's assistant from the very founding of the Kodokan, he is one of the great names in Judo. He entered the Kodokan in 1884 and gained a formidable reputation from his contests with the strong men of other jujutsu schools during the Meiji period. He later went to the United States where he taught Judo to President Theodore Roosevelt and altogether enjoyed a colorful life. Jigoro Kano awarded him the first 10th Dan ever awarded after his death on October 26, 1935, although he dated the certificate two days before the death.

Isogai, Hajime (b1871-d1947)



Entered the Kodokan in 1891 and practised assiduously under Jigoro Kano. In 1899 he was selected to go to the Butokukai in Kyoto where he worked for many years spreading Judo and training new teachers. On December 22, 1937 he was awarded the grade of 10th Dan directly by Jigoro Kano (only a few months before Jigoro Kano died). At the age of 66 he was the fourth youngest person to attain 10th Dan. He is considered to be one of the great figures in Kansai Judo (Kansai is the mid-western portion of Honshu, the main island of the Japanese group.) Isogai died on April 19, 1947.

Kotani, Sumiyuki (b1903-d1991)



He received the rank of 10th Dan in April 1984, the oldest person to be awarded this rank (until 2006 when Ichiro Abe was promoted at age 83). Graduated from Tokyo College of Education. He was one of Jigoro Kano's direct students, and only the 7th man to receive a 10th Degree Black Belt while he was still alive. He was very active in promoting Judo all around the world and was the head instructor of the International Division of the Kodokan for many years, and a professor of Tokai University. He was the Kodokan's top ranked official and Vice President of the All Japan Judo Federation. During his student days, he would practice with every powerful and skillful Judoka he could lay his hands on, rather than avoid the "beating" he knew would be coming. To be thrown, immobilized, or strangled, was nothing but delight for him. The thing that really counted was practice. He died on October 19, 1991.

Tabata, Shotaro (b1884-1950)



Entered the Kodokan in 1900 and was promoted to 10th Dan on April 5, 1948. He was the third youngest person to receive a 10th Dan. From 1905 he taught at the Butokukai in Kyoto where he trained many new instructors and contributed greatly to the development and diffusion of Judo. Together with Isogai, 10th Dan, he occupies a special place in Kansai Judo. He died on May 25, 1950.

Okano, Kotaro (b1885-d1967)



Okano was born April 1885. He became the 9th man to be promoted to 10th Degree Black Belt after his death on June 2, 1967. He was the first graduated student from the Budo Senmon-Gakko (martial art school) and he became "shihan" (master of martial art) in 6th Okayama Higher School and Okayama Police. His mat technique was one of the best among the Judo world at that time.

Shoriki, Matsutaro (b1885-d1969)



Born April 11, 1885 in Toyama Prefecture, educated at Takaoka Middle School, Fourth National Higher School, and Tokyo Imperial University. Director of the Police Affairs Section of the Metropolitan Police Board, President of the Yomiuri Shimbunsha (Japanese newspaper) and later its owner. Appointed Member of the House of Peers and elected Member of the House of Representatives. Served as State Minister. Established Japan's first commercial television station Nippon Television Network Corporation. Started professional baseball in Japan and contributed to its development. President of the Franco-Japanese University Judo Association, Chairman of Nippon Budokan, and President of National Dietman's Judo Federation. He is the only non-professional in the history of the Kodokan to hold the 10th Dan. He was promoted after his death on October 9, 1969.

Kurihara, Tamio (b1896-d1979)



Kurihara was born in May, 1896. He became the 11th person to be promoted to 10th Degree Black Belt after his death October 8, 1979. He graduated from the Kyoto Budo Senmon-Gako (Martial Art College) and became "shihan" (Master Instructor of Judo) at Kyoto 3rd higher school. One of his impressive competitions was the May 1926 Emperor's Cup final facing one of the young upcoming strong players, Ushijima Tatsukuma, a 26 year old 5th Dan. He won a decision here after a hard competition to take the title.

Nakano, Shozo (b1888-d1977)



Nakano was born in January 1888. He was promoted to 10th Degree Black Belt after his death on December 22, 1977. He became master instructor at Tokyo Ikashika University (Medical School). He energetically promoted Kodokan Judo to the world. His uchimata throw was very famous. He said "my strategy is to let my opponent get his favorite satisfactory grip and then I find my own way of chance to throw my opponent."

Toshiro Daigo (80), Ichiro Abe (83), Yoshimi Osawa (79)



On January 8, 2006 the Kodokan promoted three new tenth dans. The promotions were presented by Jigoro Kano's grandson at the Kagami Biraki (New Year's rice-cake cutting ceremony) at the Kodokan. These are the most promotions to judan ever made at one time, and the first to be made in 22 years. [More information is in this article.](#) Here is some information on each of the new Kodokan tenth dans:

[Toshiro Daigo](#) (b1926) -- Author of [Kodokan Judo: Throwing Techniques](#), and several other judo textbooks. He has been the chief instructor at the Kodokan for many years, manager of

the Japanese Judo Team at the 1976 and 1984 Olympics, an international referee, and he won the All Japan Judo Tournaments in 1951 and 1954. He had been a ninth dan since 1992 Ichiro Abe -- Mr. Abe was international chairperson of the All Nippon Judo Federation. Mr. Abe is head of the Promotions Panel at the Kodokan, and also head of the International Division. He has travelled extensively in Europe, and is a former national coach of Belgium Yoshimi Osawa -- An international referee for many years, Mr. Osawa won the Fukuoka tournament in 1948. Osawa was a fabulous technician, in the eyes of some, the best ever. Despite being a lightweight, he was considered a true threat to win the All-Japan championships.



1933 photo of Jigoro Kano (center) with 10th dans Kunisaburo Iizuka (front row second from left), Hajime Isogai (rear left), Hidekazu Nagaoka (rear row second from left), and Yoshitsugu (Yoshiaki) Yamashita (rear row second from right).

Kodokan 10th Dan in order of their promotion date:

- Yamashita, Yoshitugu (1865-1935) Promoted 10th Dan 1935
- Isogai, Hajime (1871-1947) Promoted 10th Dan 1937
- Nagaoka, Hidekazu (1876-1952) Promoted 10th Dan 1937
- Mifune, Kyuzo (1883-1965) Promoted 10th Dan 1945
- Iizuka, Kunisaburo (1875-1958) Promoted 10th Dan 1946
- Samura, Kaichiro (1880-1964) Promoted 10th Dan 1948
- Tabata, Shotaro (1884-1950) Promoted 10th Dan 1948
- Okano, Kotaro (1885-1967) Promoted 10th Dan 1967
- Shoriki, Matsutaro (1885-1969) Promoted 10th Dan 1969
- Nakano, Shozo (1888-1977) Promoted 10th Dan 1977
- Kurihara, Tamio (1896-1979) Promoted 10th Dan 1979
- Kotani, Sumiyuki (1903-1991) Promoted 10th Dan 1984
- Daigo, Toshiro (1926-), Promoted 10th Dan 2006
- Abe, Ichiro, Promoted 10th Dan 2006
- Osawa, Yoshimi, Promoted 10th Dan 2006

Note: in addition to these Kodokan 10th dan the International Judo Federation promoted:

- Anton Geesink (NED) , Promoted to 10th dan in 1997.
- Charles Palmer (UK), Promoted to 10th dan in 1997.
- George Kerr (UK), Promoted to 10th dan in 2010

Some countries have also made promotions to 10th dan:

- Henri Courtine in France in 2007
- Jaap Nauwelaerts de Agé in Holland in 2008.
- Fukuda, Keiko in USA in 2011