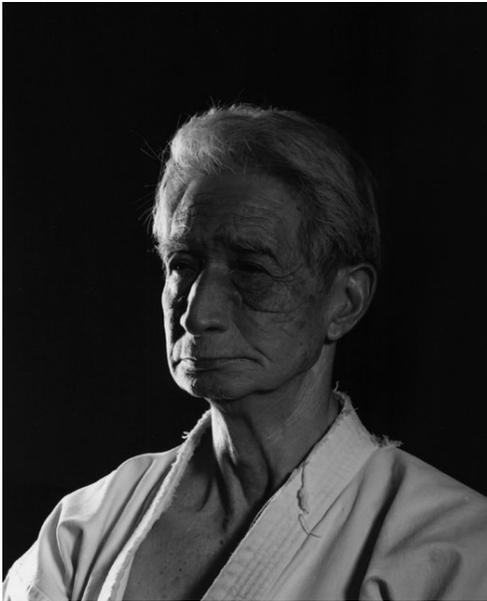


## Master Hidetaka Nishiyama Biography



Born in Tokyo in 1928, Hidetaka Nishiyama began his karate training in 1943 under Gichin Funakoshi, founder of modern Shotokan karate. Two years later, while enrolled at Takushoku University, he became a member of the university's karate team and in 1949, its captain. He co-founded the All Japan Collegiate Karate Federation and was elected its first chairman.

In 1951, after graduating with a Master of Arts degree in Economics, he co-founded the Japan Karate Association (JKA) and was elected to the JKA Board of Directors.

In 1952, he was selected as a member of the martial arts combat instruction staff for the United States' Strategic Air Command (SAC) Combat Training Program. In this program, SAC personnel received training in Judo, Aikido and Karate from top martial arts instructors including Gichin Funakoshi, Masatoshi Nakayama and Isao Obata.

In 1953, SAC invited Nishiyama as part of a ten-member Budo Mission from Japan to visit SAC bases in the United States for three months to give instruction in the martial arts.

In 1960, his book "Karate: The Art of Empty-Hand Fighting" was published and even today, is considered the definitive textbook on the subject. Now in its 80th printing, it is believed to be the best-selling karate textbook in history.

In 1961, Nishiyama came to the United States on the invitation of SAC karate students and JKA members residing in the country. That same year, Nishiyama organized the All-American Karate Federation (AAKF) as a nationally based amateur karate organization. In November 1961 Nishiyama organized, under the control of the AAKF, the first National Karate Championship in Los Angeles, California where he also established his dojo. Since then, Nishiyama has been a major force in the propagation of the JKA-Shotokan style of karate in the United States and abroad.

In 1965, Nishiyama organized a cooperative effort of the major Japanese karate styles that led to the first United States vs. Japan Goodwill Karate Tournament, the first truly international karate competition.

Then, in 1968, Nishiyama organized the first World Invitational Karate Tournament held at the Los Angeles Sports Arena in conjunction with the Olympic Commemorative Tournament in Mexico City, hosted by the Mexico Karate Federation. A conference that took place during the tournament culminated in the formation of an international karate organization that would hold its first World Championship in Tokyo.

In 1970, during a reorganization of the AAKF as the Traditional Karate governing body, the JKA Karate group separated and became the JKA-US part of the AAKF. Nishiyama continued as Chairman of the JKA-US and also as Chairman of the AAKF. In April of that same year, the AAKF became a member of

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the U.S. Olympic Committee.

In 1973, Nishiyama co-founded the Pan American Karate Union (PAKU) and was elected its first Chairman with the first PAKU Championship held in Rio de Janeiro.

Based on a 1968 agreement during a Mexico City conference, tournaments were held in Tokyo (1970) and Paris (1973), but these World Championships resulted in disagreements caused by the lack of a formal international organization. An international meeting in New York City then resulted in the formation of the International Amateur Karate Federation (IAKF). With Nishiyama as Executive Director, the IAKF held its first World Championship in Los Angeles in 1975.

In 1976, Nishiyama oversaw the formation of the Mediterranean Karate Championship Committee and the Bolivian Karate Federation. Also that year, acting on behalf of the IAKF, he submitted an application to the International Olympic Committee (IOC) seeking Olympic recognition for Karate.

In 1977, Nishiyama supported the formation of the Central America/Caribbean Karate Confederation and the Asia/Oceania Amateur Karate Federation.

In 1979, in accordance with U.S. Public Law regulating national amateur sports governing bodies, the All American Karate Federation was succeeded by the American Amateur Karate Federation, a public benefit, non-profit corporation and Nishiyama was elected its first President.

In 1981, he lent support to the formation of the South American Karate Confederation and the North American Karate Confederation.

Then, in 1985, the IAKF changed its name to the International Traditional Karate Federation (ITKF) because the word "karate" had become a generic term applied to a variety of kicking/punching sports. The ITKF, under Nishiyama's direction, wanted to make it clear it was the governing body of Traditional Karate. This was confirmed in 1987 when the International Olympic Committee (IOC) confirmed that ITKF was the governing body for Traditional Karate.

In recognition of his decades of effort on behalf of Traditional Karate and his contribution towards the physical and psychological health of Americans through karate, the U.S. National Flag was flown over the Capitol in Washington, D.C. on October 10, 1999 on the occasion of his 71st birthday.

In May 2000, he was further honored when the Nishiyama Cup was held in Moscow, the first official karate event conducted in Russia since the end of the Soviet Union.

Then, in November of 2000, the Emperor of Japan awarded Nishiyama with "Kunyoto" - Fourth Order of Merit - and was decorated with "Zuiho-sho" - The Order of the Sacred Treasure - for his many contributions to promote Japanese culture through Traditional Karate.

In addition, the Republic of Poland honored him in October 2001 when the President of the Republic of Poland, Mr. Aleksander Kwasniewski, bestowed upon him one of the highest medals in Poland, the Officer's Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Poland, on the occasion of the first Traditional Karate World Cup.

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## **International Traditional Karate Federation**

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Because of his superior technical expertise and disciplined instruction, Nishiyama's reputation has spread worldwide. He has trained thousands of students, many of them now well known themselves, as national and international champions and instructors.

Despite a hectic teaching and traveling schedule, he steadfastly pursued the study of the original Karate-do technical training systems in order to better integrate those fundamental concepts into modern methods of instruction.

2005 marked the completion of his over three decade's long study of Budo and its importance to the art of Traditional Karate. He said, "At this time, I am very proud to have finally completed this lifelong project and have confidence that we can now pass the true art of Traditional Karate on to future generations. Now is your time to meet the new challenges and accept the opportunities offered by this body of knowledge so that Traditional Karate may continue to grow and develop for the benefit of all who strive for higher levels of understanding both in mind and body."

He introduced the new Traditional Karate Training System at the 2005 International Camp in San Diego. At the 2006 and 2007 camps, he added more detailed study of Budo and its connection with the high level techniques required by the art of Traditional Karate.

Until illness cut short his activities, Nishiyama kept a hectic schedule of teaching Mondays through Fridays at the National Karate Institute (also known as L. A. Central Dojo), traveling to conduct seminars and ranking examinations across the U.S. and around the world, attending all national and international competitions, as well as personally directing the administrative staff of the ITKF International Office and AAKF National Office.

He passed away on November 7, 2008 in Los Angeles, California. He is survived by his wife, Yohko, and daughters Yumi, Amy and Nami.

Today his name continues to be a force in the Traditional Karate world as the very high standards he set for himself and his students continue to live on in Traditional Karate "dojos" around the world.

### **International Traditional Karate Federation**

Members of the International Traditional Karate Federation continue striving to preserve the spirit of Budo in traditional karate training and promote its development worldwide for the benefit of succeeding generations dedicated to learning this true martial art.

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