

Who is the guy in all those pictures?

By Professor George Arrington

When doing any type of research and something is repeated over and over, it usually has some significance. In my many years of studying the historical pictures related to Danzan-Ryū Jūjutsu, I have seen the man pictured at the right to appear again and again in group photos (usually at a black belt promotion ceremony.) In addition, he almost always has a position of prominence in the picture. As one who is interested in learning about those times, I always wondered about his identity.



More than a decade ago I was informed that this person was named Kosogabe and may be the teacher of the Kosogabe-Ryū mentioned in Professor Okazaki's Mokuroku. After receiving this information from several other sources, I reported that this was his name. I was incorrect.

The gentleman pictured to the right was indeed an instructor of Professor Okazaki, but his name was **Professor Haruji Horimoto**, 堀本春治. He was born in 1873 in Japan and immigrated to Hawaii in 1893. He worked as a mason and lived with his wife Sada and son Akira in Honolulu. His identification was confirmed by three different newspapers of that time. In one account of a 1938 promotion ceremony, famed newspaperman "Red" McQueen wrote:

"Following the demonstrations, Prof. Haruji Horimoto, who taught Prof. Okazaki jiu-jitsu many years ago, presented the diplomas to the graduating class. Prof. Horimoto is over 80 years old but doesn't look a day over 60."

(Note: He was actually 65 years old at the time.)

Professor Horimoto, as alluded to by the title of this article, is seen in many Kodenkan class photos. Here are some samples:



When faced with overwhelming evidence to the contrary, it is an honest historian who has the maturity and courage to admit and correct his error. ~ Professor Arrington