

Our History 沿革



Yoshida & Partners, one of the leading law firms in Japan that specializes in maritime cases, also deals with the other areas of practice such as trade, commerce, logistics and other international and domestic businesses.



It was originally founded in 1924 in Kobe by the late Seizo Yoshida (1888 - 1973). He and his firm mainly represented such clients as shipowners, charterers, underwriters and P&I clubs, pioneering in negotiating in the fields of shipping, trade, commerce and other businesses.

When Capt. Yoichi Ogawa (1934 - 2013) joined the firm in 1969, it achieved a substantial expansion, thanks to his experience as a mariner, practical knowledge on shipping, insight and passion. His colleagues and other outside specialists accelerated the firm's growth, particularly in the marine casualty area. Back then, Japan was undergoing the economic growth and internationalization. Yoshida & Partners' contribution to the Japanese shipping and insurance industries was immeasurable.



Since then, the firm had been engaged in numerous major cases, representing Japanese shipowners and underwriters for the most part. Finding Yuyo Maru No.10 / Pacific Ares collision (November 1974) a perfect opportunity, it moved its headquarters from Kobe to Tokyo in 1975. The cases Yoshida & Partners had accepted include collision cases such as USS George Washington / Nissho Maru (April 1981), Sanko Honour / Maersk Navigator (February 1993), and oil pollution cases such as Miya Maru No. 8 (March 1979), Eiko Maru No. 1 (August 1983), Toyotaka Maru (October 1984),

Senyo Maru (September 1995), Nakhodka (January 1997), Osung No.3 (April 1997) and Shosei Maru (November 2006). It also dealt with piracy cases in a style of robbing ship and cargo, including Tenyu Maru (1998), Arondra Rainbow (1999) and Global Mars (2000).

After merged with Nakamura & Associates in 2000, Yoshida & Partners continued to thrive, handling cases such as salvage and wreck removal after a series of the groundings at Kashima of Giant Step and Ocean Victory (October 2006), multiple collision of Gold Leader / Ocean Phoenix / Eisei Maru No. 5 at the Akashi Straits (March 2008), collision of DDH Kurama / Carina Star at the Kanmon Straits (October 2009), and grounding/wreck removal of Ariake (November 2009). Among others, dealing with salvage and wreck removal in the aftermath of countless marine casualties caused by the Great East Japan Earthquake (March 2011) was the most challenging. As piracies and hijacking in Somalia and West Africa began to frequent in 2001, the office could not remain irrelevant, being heavily involved in related cases.





Lately, cases of post-wreck, post-sinking wreck removal have increased, and more specialized expertise with upmost attention to the environment is the minimum line. Cases of container ship fire, complex in itself, can be even more so with many conflicting parties and many different jurisdictions. When dealing with marine accidents that involve freight mobility calls for yet totally different knowledge. When a case relates to structure, equipment or bunker of vessels, in-depth technological understanding is a must. Such piracy cases as highjacking, kidnapping and robbery should be handled from totally different perspectives.

As with charter party, ships' sales and other contractual matters, effective backing is impossible without substantial knowledge on ship engineering and market trends, and on-site experience in addition to legal and contractual awareness and attention. This is exactly why we have in-house marine counsels and consultants, working together closely with the lawyers to meet the needs of clients.

With a few more who joined recently, our office is a team of ten-plus attorneys-at-law and four marine counsels and consultants specialized in shipping industry. We are acknowledged as one of the top-notch maritime law firms, frequently appearing in various journals and publications. We are also known as a leader in training maritime lawyers. Many of up-and-coming and seasoned maritime lawyers were either trained with us or were former colleagues of ours.

