

The Professors of Danzan Ryu Jujitsu

Bob McKean

June 28, 2010

Many of the classical Japanese martial arts use titles such as *Renshi* (trainer or assistant instructor), *Kyoshi* (doctrinal teacher or instructor), *Hanshi* (model teacher or master) and *Shihan* (master) for the higher ranking members of their particular ryu. So why is the title of Professor used in Danzan Ryu and where did it come from?

Master Henry Seishiro Okazaki was known by his students and the local Hawaiian community as "The Professor." The title of Professor is said to have originated with some of Professor Okazaki's early American (Caucasian) students. They began calling him Professor him out of respect for his knowledge, ability and willingness to teach his ryu to many different people. Professor is a western title and honor that, to them, came close to the martial art title of Shihan or Master. This titled, borrowed from the Western academic tradition, had long been applied to high-ranking Japanese martial artists. For example, there was "Professor" John J. O'Brien, who received his diploma in Jui Jitsu in 1905 from the Governor of Nagasaki and who introduced President Teddy Roosevelt to Jiu Jitsu. There was also "Professor" Kishoku Inouye, the man who taught H. Irving Hancock, author of the 1905 book, *The Complete Kano Jiu-Jitsu (Judo)*.

Being credited as one of the first Japanese martial arts instructors to break away from many of the old Japanese traditions by teaching non-Asian students, Professor Okazaki willingly embraced the Western title of Professor. He was the only "official" person to hold the title of Professor of Danzan Ryu until after his death in 1951. We know that Professor Okazaki awarded the title of *Shihan* to some of his senior black belts by way of a *kaidensho* diploma (a master teaching certificate). There is no known evidence that Professor Okazaki ever awarded the title of *Renshi*, *Kyoshi* or *Hanshi* in the form of a diploma or certificate.

In 1952, the American Jujitsu Institute of Hawaii (AJI) elected Sig Kufferath to head their organization. It was during this time he was awarded the title of Professor by the AJI. Professor Okazaki did not name a successor to assume the title of *Soke* of his ryu. (*Soke*, literally means "the head family." In the Japanese martial arts it is often used to indicate "headmaster" or even "grand master.") Professor Kufferath held the position of Professor and head of the AJI until 1960 when he left Hawaii and moved to California. In 1962 the AJI elected Sam S. Luke to fill the vacancy left by Professor Kufferath. Sam S. Luke was then awarded the title of Professor by the AJI. Shortly after Professor Luke's appointment the AJI began to award the title of Professor to its senior black belts. Today the AJI awards the title of Professor to those who hold the rank of *shichidan* (7th dan). The AJI lists the names of 17 Professors on its website. www.americanjujitsuinstitute.com

During the late 1940s, the American Judo & Jujitsu Federation (AJJF) was beginning to form into a DZR organization. The four founders of the AJJF, Bud Estes, Ray Law, John Cahill, and Richard Rickerts became the first to hold the title of Professor in the AJJF. On May 1, 1949 they recognized themselves by issuing each other an AJJF

certificate with the title of *Professor Black Belt Degree*. It has been said they received the approval, in the form of a letter, from Professor Okazaki to use the title of Professor since they were forming a new DZR organization on the mainland. This letter has not been verified and remains part of the AJJF folklore.

There are copies in existence of rank certificates showing that Professor Bud Estes received a *Rank Three (sandan)* certificate from Professor Okazaki on August 21, 1943 and that Professor Cahill received a *Rank Five (godan)* certificate on September 18, 1949. No rank certificates for Professors Law and Rickerts have been discovered but it is believed that Professor Law held a *Rank Two (nidan)* certificate from Professor Okazaki. The rank for Professor Rickerts is unknown but it is believed to be a *Rank Five (godan)* certificate: Of the four founders, he was the senior student.

Since 1949, the AJJF has awarded the title of Professor to 43 people. In its early years the AJJF awarded the title of Professor to those who were promoted to the rank of *godan* (5th dan). In recent years they have changed the rank requirement to *rokudan* (6th dan), but the title of professor is no longer automatically awarded with the rank. The AJJF website lists the biographies of 14 current, 12 past and 17 deceased Professors.

www.ajjf.org

Professor William (Bill) Montero Sr. received a *Rank Three (sandan)* certificate and *mokuroku* from Professor Okazaki on August 21, 1943 and was a graduate of the Nikko Restorative Massage Institute. He received a *Rank Four (yodan)* certificate from the American Jujitsu Institute (AJI) on May 5, 1951, just after the death of Professor Okazaki. This certificate was signed by Professor Hachiro Okazaki, son of Professor Henry Okazaki. On December 6, 1953 Professor Montero became the second person to be awarded the title of *Professor Black Belt Degree* by the founders of the AJJF. In the late 1980s the Kodenkan Yudanshakai presented Professor Montero with the rank of *judan* (10th dan) and the title of *Dai Shihan*. Professor Montero was the sensei of the Pacific Judo Academy (San Jose, California) for more than 45 years; Professor Bob Krull was one of his most well-known students. Professor Montero was actively involved in teaching and promoting Danzan Ryu Jujitsu and restorative massage until his death in 1992. For additional information on Professor Montero you can find his biography on the Pacific Jujitsu Alliance website at www.pacificjujitsualliance.com and the American Judo & Jujitsu Federation website at www.ajjf.org

Professor Wally Jay has been active in the martial arts for more than 70 years and is one of the last living black belts of Professor Okazaki. He was a student of Professor Okazaki for more than 11 years and was a graduate of the Nikko Restorative Massage Institute. Professor Okazaki presented Professor Jay with a *mokuroku* (instructor scroll) in 1944 and a *kaidensho* in 1948. Professors Wally Jay, Bill Montero and John Cahill were instrumental in promoting and coaching judo in Northern California during the 1950s and 1960s when judo was just beginning to become organized as a competitive sport in the United States. Professor Jay is the founder of Small Circle Jujitsu and was one of the co-founders of the Jujitsu America. He holds the rank of *judan* (10th dan) in Danzan Ryu Jujitsu and *rokudan* (6th dan) in judo.

Professors John Chow-Hoon, Carl Beaver and Willy Cahill were also co-founders of Jujitsu America. Professor Willy Cahill, son of the late Professor John Cahill, has had a long and distinguished Danzan Ryu and judo career. The Cahill's Judo Academy, in

San Bruno, California, has been in operation since 1948. Professor Cahill holds the rank of *judan* (10th dan) in Danzan Ryu Jujitsu and *hichidan* (8th dan) in judo. He has coached two US Olympic Judo Teams and five World Teams and has produced more than 1,000 national and international medal winners and four Olympic and Paralympic coaches. Professor Cahill has also been active in developing and promoting Sport Jujitsu. For more information on Professors Wally Jay and Willy Cahill and Jujitsu America you can go to www.jujitsuamerica.org.

Many other Danzan Ryu Professors have been involved in competing, teaching and coaching judo. The late Professor Bob Krull (PJA) held the rank of *godan* (5th dan) in judo and for many years was a nationally certified and active judo referee. Professor Bernard Baptiste (AJI) spent many years coaching judo in the Monterey region of California. Professor Rory Rebmann (AJJF) has been one of the most active DZR Professors teaching and coaching judo. For many years he has coached a very successful junior judo program in the east San Francisco bay area of California. Some DZR Professors have been involved with the Hawaiian striking systems of kenpo and kajukenbo. Professor Joe Holck, founder and head of the Kodenkan Yudanshakai, is also one of the founders of kajukenbo. Professor Holck integrated many of the striking arts into his teaching of Danzan Ryu.

Professor John Chow-Hoon was a long time student of Danzan Ryu. Besides his DZR training he also held the rank of *sandan* (3rd dan) in judo and had actively studied Koshoryu Kenpo with his brothers William and Frank. Professor Chow-Hoon was the founder of Chow-Hoon Goshin Jitsu. After his death one of his senior students, Professor James Muro, became the head of the organization. The Chow-Hoon Goshin Jitsu organization has produced over 150 black belts and has schools in England, Scotland, Portugal and Canada. For more information on Professor Chow-Hoon and the Chow-Hoon Goshin Jitsu organization you can go to www.goshinjitsu.net.

Professor Sig Kufferath is a well know figure in the Danzan Ryu community and was active in teaching and promoting Danzan Ryu Jujitsu until his death in 1999. He had been a student of Professor Okazaki for more than 14 years and was a graduate of the Nikko Restorative Massage Institute. Professor Okazaki presented Professor Kufferath with a *mokuroku* in 1942 and *kaidensho* in 1948. He also held dan ranks in judo and aikido and was a co-found of Ken Ju Ryu Kenpo Jujitsu. Professor Kufferath is also a co-founder of the Kodenkan Danzan Ryu Association with Professors Doug Kiehl and Ramon Ancho. In 1996 Professor Kufferath founded the Kilohana Martial Arts Association. Professor Kufferath, active in the martial arts for more than 60 years, was awarded the rank of *judan* (10th dan) and title of *Dai Shihan* by the Kodenkan Yudanshakai. Professor Kufferath was recognized as a *judan* (10th dan) by many of the Danzan Ryu organizations. For more information on Professor Sig Kufferath you can go to, www.kilohana.org, www.kodenkan.com and www.ajjf.org.

During the 1950s and 1960s most Danzan Ryu schools and Professors were found only in Hawaii and California. As a result of the dedication and efforts of many Professors, Danzan Ryu is now being taught and promoted throughout the rest of the country.

- Professor Bill Beach, founder of the Hawaiian Jui-Jitsu System, can be credited with bringing Danzan Ryu to the Florida and the southern United States.

- The late Professor Pat Browne (AJJF) was very active in promoting Danzan Ryu in the Chicago area and the Midwest.
- Professor Joe Holck, founder of the Kodenkan Yudanshakai, and his family have been actively teaching and promoting Danzan Ryu through out Arizona and the Southwest.
- Professor Gene Edwards, founder of the Christian Jujitsu Association, www.christianjujitsu.com, has been teaching and promoting Danzan Ryu in Montana since 1994.
- Professor Dennis Estes (AJJF) and his student, Professor Bob Hodgkin (AJJF), are currently teaching and promoting Danzan Ryu in Utah.
- Professor Herb LeGue, founder of the Bushidokan Federation, www.bushidokan.us, has been teaching and promoting Danzan Ryu in the Reno/Sierra Nevada area for several decades. He has also been active in promoting Danzan Ryu in South America.
- Professor Larry Nolte (AJJF) has been the sensei of the Medford Judo Academy, located in southern Oregon, for more than 50 years. See www.medfordjudo.com. The Medford Judo Academy celebrated its 50th anniversary in May of 2010. Professor Nolte has produced more than 40 black belts. One of his black belts who initially studied with him in the 60s, Ron Jennings, was awarded the title of Professor by the Shoshin Ryu Yudanshakai and the American Jujitsu Institute. Professor Jennings is active in teaching and promoting Danzan Ryu in northern Oregon and Washington.

This is only a few of the many Professors who have contributed to the propagation of Danzan Ryu Jujitsu. Professor George Arrington has developed and maintains a very extensive website devoted to the history of Danzan Ryu Jujitsu and the teachings of Professor Okazaki. For additional information about many of the old time students of Professor Okazaki and many of the Danzan Ryu organizations go to his website at: www.danzan.com.

During the years Professor Okazaki taught his system, the black belt was the highest and only belt color used. It was not until several years after his death that some Danzan Ryu organizations began to use the more modern colored belt ranking systems found in Judo and other Japanese martial arts. Today, many of the Danzan Ryu organizations use the black belt for 1st, 2nd and 3rd degree dan ranks (*shodan*, *nidan* and *sandan*), black and red paneled belts for 4th and 5th degree dan ranks (*yodan* & *godan*), red and white paneled belts for 6th, 7th and 8th degree dan ranks (*rokudan*, *shichidan* and *hachidan*) and red belts for 9th and 10th degree dan ranks (*kudan* and *judan*).

Not only have most of the Danzan Ryu organizations added colored belts for the dan ranks, they have also gone from a 5-dan system to a 10-dan rank system. Professor Okazaki originally designed his ryu to be a 5-dan rank system. In the early days of the AJJF, these ranks were: Instructor, Senior Instructor, Master, Senior Master, and Professor. The highest dan rank obtainable was *godan* (5th dan) or more commonly known then as “*Rank V*” or “*Rank Five*”. I found no evidence showing that Professor Okazaki ever issued a rank certificate above “*Rank V*” to any of his students.

In 1979 the author, recorded in one of his jujitsu notebooks, a lecture that took place during a black belt class conducted by the late AJJF Professor Bud Estes. Someone asked Professor Estes the question, "What is a Professor?" He responded by saying, "A Professor is a humble person in service to the ryu and the federation." He went on to say, "A Professor is also a person who knows and understands the system and has earned the trust and respect of his students."

Over the years this same question has been posed to many different Danzan Ryu Professors. Here are some of their responses.

- "A Professor is a role model for his students and he should always lead by example."
- "To become a Professor you must first abandon your ego."
- "A Professor respects and preserves the ryu to the best of his ability."
- "A Professor puts the welfare of his students in front of his own needs, desires and ego."
- "A Professor always treats his students with respect and does nothing to cause them to lose their respect for him. Respect is always earned and not demanded."
- "A Professor never puts himself on a pedestal. Being humble is part of being a Professor."
- "A Professor facilitates the teaching of the ryu by helping the dojo sensei and his students."
- "A Professor is more than a good technician and teacher of DZR. He is also a scholar and a historian of the ryu."
- "A Professor promotes the known facts about Professor Okazaki and the ryu and dismisses unsubstantiated stories."
- "A Professor studies the writing of Professor Okazaki and uses this information as a guide to teach others."
- A Professor leads by example and exhibits a high ethical and moral standard for his students to follow.
- "A Professor is a mentor, responsible for teaching people to some day take his place."
- "A Professor is nothing more than a student who has put in many, many years of dedicated study."

- “A Professor does not change the teachings of Master Okazaki. If he chooses to do so then he should change the name to something other than Danzan Ryu.
- A Professor is someone who is able to transmit the complete system of Danzan Ryu Jujitsu and to form and sustain the organization necessary for this transmission to take place.

The sensei-student relationship was one of the most important traditions and values passed on to me by my sensei. Professor Montero said the importance of this relationship was taught to him by Professor Okazaki and Professor John Cahill. “The sensei is ‘King’ of his dojo and he alone is responsible for teaching and guiding his students along their Danzan Ryu journey.” The path way to become a Professor includes being a good sensei. A Professor is a resource for the dojo sensei and not a replacement for him.

Since the 1950s many different Danzan Ryu organizations have been formed with the purpose of promoting the teachings of Professor Okazaki. Some of these organizations include the American Jujitsu Institute, the American Judo & Jujitsu Federation, the Kodokan Yudanshakai, the Danzan Ryu Yudanshakai, Chow-Hoon Goshin Jitsu, the Pacific Jujitsu Alliance, Jujitsu America, the Kilohana Martial Arts Association, the Jujitsu Institute of Danzan Ryu, the Shoshin Ryu Yudanshakai, the Christian Jujitsu Association, the Bushidokan Federation, the Hawaiian Jui-Jitsu System and the Kodokan Danzan Ryu Jujitsu Association.

There have been a total of 193 people who have been awarded the title of Professor by these organizations; 30 were also awarded the rank of *judan* (10th dan). Of the 193, 178 (92%) have been men and 15 (8%) have been women. A complete list of Danzan Ryu Professors and Danzan Ryu organizations is posted on the Pacific Jujitsu Alliance website www.pacificjujitsualliance.com. This list is a living document and will be periodically updated as new information is received.

The title of Professor can be obtained several ways.

- The title of Professor may be awarded by the *Soke* (head master or inheritor of the ryu). In the case of Danzan Ryu Jujitsu, Professor Okazaki did not designate an inheritor.
- The title of Professor may be awarded by the Professors of an organization. These Professors, as a board of directors, vote to accept a new Professor into their group. The American Judo & Jujitsu Association is one of the organizations that select its Professors in this manner.
- The title of Professor may be awarded by a Professor to his senior black belt students. Professors Sig Kufferath, Gene Edwards and Herb LaGue, all of whom received their professorships from organizations, are examples of some of the professors who have awarded the title of Professor to several of their senior black belt students.

- The title of Professor may be awarded by the membership of an organization. School heads and black belts select the people who they believe have best served the ryu and their organization.
- The title of Professor may be awarded by one's own peers (other ranking Professors and black belts) as well as his or her students.
- The title of Professor is taken by a person who feels he or she deserves the title and recognition – a self promotion.

Each Danzan Ryu organization has established its own standards and requirements for Professor. Most of these standards and requirements are consistent among the different organizations.

Commonly used requirements for awarding the title of Professor:

- Having a thorough and working knowledge of all the Danzan Ryu boards.
- Having a thorough and working knowledge of Professor Okazaki's massage arts.
- Being able to teach the arts of Danzan Ryu Jujitsu to others.
- Having been a school head (sensei) and has produced a number of black belt students.
- Having shown loyalty and support to the ryu and the organization they belong to.
- Having demonstrated behavior and conduct becoming of a Professor – honesty, integrity, high moral and ethical standards and compliance with the law.
- Willing to accept the duty and responsibility of protecting, preserving and perpetuating the teaching of Professor Okazaki and the arts of Danzan Ryu Jujitsu.

During the early years of Danzan Ryu many of Professor Okazaki's students were able to learn the entire ryu within 4 to 10 years. These black belts were often, but not always, presented with a *kaidensho* diploma and given the title of *Shihan*. There is no set timetable for one to follow in order to become eligible for the title of Professor. Each organization has established its own time-in-grade requirements. Some people actively train more often than others do. Many of Professor Okazaki's black belts were able to train 5 or more days a week. Today, few Danzan Ryu schools have regularly scheduled classes 6 to 7 days a week. What once may have taken a student 4 to 10 years to learn the entire ryu may now take as long as 20 to 30 years to accomplish. Many years ago it was explained to me by a senior DZR Professor that, "We all can get to the top of the mountain but some of us have to take a longer road than others to get there."

Here is just a small sample of some of the Danzan Ryu Professors, showing their years of training and service to the ryu from their start to the time they were awarded the title of Professor. You can clearly see that some roads were longer than others.

Time in grade: From Beginning to Professor.

Information was obtained through website sources and personal contacts.

Danzan Ryu Organizations

AJFJ = American Judo & Jujitsu Federation

AJI = American Jujitsu Institute

DRY = Danzan Ryu Yudanshakai

KMAA = Kilohana Martial Arts Association

SRY = Shoshin Ryu Yudanshakai

SCJA = Southern California Jujitsu Association

PJA = Pacific Jujitsu Alliance

KDRJA = Kodenkan Danzan Ryu Jujitsu Association

10 years or less

9 years Lamar Fisher (AJFJ)

10 years Tom Ball (AJFJ)

11 – 20 years

11 years Ray Law (AJFJ founder) Approx. 2 years with Professor Okazaki

11 years Bert Aspinall (AJFJ)

12 years James Musselman (AJFJ)

12 years Kitty Smith (AJFJ)

13 years Bud Estes (AJFJ founder) Approx. 4 years with Professor Okazaki

13 years Chuck Smith (AJFJ)

14 years Betty Mallette (AJFJ)

14 years Bill Beach (AJFJ)

15 years John Cahill (AJFJ founder) Approx. 11 years with Professor Okazaki

16 years Sig Kufferath (AJI) Approx. 14 years with Professor Okazaki

16 years Pat Browne (AJFJ)

17 years Richard Rickerts (AJFJ founder) Approx. 9 years with Professor Okazaki

17 years John Congistre (AJFJ)

17 years Rory Rebmann (AJFJ)

18 years Bill Montero (AJFJ) Approx. 13 years with Professor Okazaki

18 years Jane Carr (AJFJ)

19 years Gene Edwards (AJFJ)

21 – 30 years

21 years Mike Esmailizadeh (DRY)

21 years Tom Ryan (AJFJ)

24 years Clive Guth (KDRJA)

24 years Tom Jenkins (AJFJ)

24 years Geoff Lane (AJFJ)

24 years Jim Marcinkus (SCJA)

25 years Bill Fischer (SRY)

25 years Bob Hudson (AJFJ)

25 Years Jon Jacques (SRY)

27 years Bob Hodgkin (AJJF)

31 – 40 years

31 years Maureen Browne (SRY)
32 years Carl Beaver (SRY) Student of Professor Okazaki
34 years Bob McKean (PJA)
35 years Don Cross (AJJF)
35 years Tom Hill (AJJF)
36 years Hans Ingebretsen (KMAA)
37 years George Arrington (KDRJA)
37 years Ron Jennings (SRY)
40 years Sheryl Hager (AJJF)

41 or more years

41 years Dale Kahoun (KMAA)
42 years Dennis Estes (AJJF)
43 years Larry Nolte (AJJF)

The title of Professor usually represents an established level of proficiency and dedication. The promotion, however, unfortunately but necessarily, is subject to personalities, loyalties, and alliances. The basic requirements for *Shihan* were established by Professor Okazaki over 70 years ago. Professor Okazaki did not place a limit on how many black belts could obtain a *kaidensho* diploma and the title *Shihan*. For the ryu to continue to grow and prosper, as envisioned by Professor Okazaki, the DZR organizations must continue to make the path to becoming a Professor obtainable.

Professor Okazaki would no doubt be very pleased to know that these special people are carrying on his ryu in the same spirit and love which he taught his own students many years ago. The future of Danzan Ryu Jujitsu lies with those who continue to learn, protect, preserve and promote the teachings of Professor Henry Seishiro Okazaki.

Professor Bob McKean
A student of Danzan Ryu Jujitsu

Professor McKean has been a student of Danzan Ryu Jujitsu and a member of the American Judo & Jujitsu Federation for over 40 years. Bob began his study of Danzan Ryu Jujitsu in 1969 and was fortunate to have been a student of Professor William (Bill) Montero Sr. He is one of the co-founders of the Pacific Jujitsu Alliance and is a charter member of the Kilohana Martial Arts Association where he is currently a member of their Standards Board. He has been a school head and has taught Danzan Ryu Jujitsu to hundreds of people, promoting 28 students to the rank of shodan and above.

Professor McKean served 27 years as career police officer, retiring as a lieutenant in 2001. He earned a Bachelors of Art Degree from Sacramento State University in Criminal Justice and a California State Community College Teaching Credential. Bob is a graduate of the F.B.I. Police Defensive Tactics Instructor Course and holds the rank of Shichidan and title of Professor from the Pacific Jujitsu Alliance and the Kilohana Martial Arts Association. In addition he also holds the rank of godan from the American Judo & Jujitsu Federation, nidan in Judo from the United States Judo Association and shodan in Shotokan Karate-Do.

Professor McKean can be reached for comments or questions concerning this article at cop2rn@aol.com