

A JU-JITSU MASTER'S PHILOSOPHY

by William S. Morris

In preparing the manuscript of "The Esoteric Principles of Judo" I have used photographs of an original torah no maki diploma awarded to Bud Estes of the Chico, California, Judo Academy; a translation of his own diploma prepared in 1939 for Ray Law of Law's Judo School in Oakland, California, by Mr. Akira Miyazaki of the Imperial Japanese Embassy; and some notes translated by Mr. S. Yanagihara of Judo International in San Francisco, California. In addition, I am indebted to a number of Japanese and Chinese students attending Napa Junior College for suggestions on rendering specific characters, and finally, I must thank Mr. Shimizu, Editor of the Japanese newspaper Hokubei Mainichi, for resolving several last-minute questions.

In general, however, I have sought to render the spirit rather than the letter of the text insofar as I was able to recognize it; consequently, several passages differ markedly from earlier translations. Those familiar with the difficulties of rendering complex Sino-Japanese philosophical concepts into English will, I hope, not judge the result too harshly. This text suggests the reason so many people find in the martial arts a fascination and deep meaning that exceeds any simple preoccupation with sport or physical culture, but it is not my purpose to offer a

detailed explication here of Professor Okazaki's philosophy of judo. The text speaks for itself.

Professor Henry Seishiro Okazaki, the Father of American Jujitsu, founded the Kodokan in Honolulu, Hawaii, in 1929, and dedicated it to the propagation of judo and jujitsu among Americans of all racial groups.

"Kodokan" means "School of Ancient Tradition" and denotes both his school in Honolulu and the Okazaki or Kodokan Jujitsu system. Both the Professor and the Okazaki system were for many years the focus of controversy, but this inspiring and methodical system for teaching self-defense jujitsu in combination with competitive judo remains one of the most respected self-defense systems in the United States today.

To his earliest disciples, Professor Okazaki presented a diploma in the form of a torah no maki, or scroll, which he personally inscribed. The scroll detailed the history of jujitsu - or judo, as it was then beginning to be called - a personal history of the Master himself, lists of the arts or courses the disciple had mastered interspersed with certain admonitions, precepts, and cautions, which, taken together, set forth in his own words the Master's philosophy of judo.

Professor Okazaki thought of judo first as a means of developing character and second as a method of physical and mental development. This statement of "The Esoteric Principles of Judo," embodying as it does both Zen Buddhist and Confucian ethical concepts, remains as valid today as when it was first written and certainly deserves the thoughtful consideration of all who practice the martial arts.

Professor Okazaki, as the text shows, uses the words judo and ju-jitsu interchangeably for reasons which become clear when one realizes that the word judo, or "gentle way," which stressed the ethical and philosophical concept of do, or a "way" in harmony with natural law, was just beginning to supplant the older term jujitsu, or "gentle practice," as a popular generic term for the whole of the Japanese national art of self-defense formerly practiced by the Samurai or "warrior class." More recently, however, the Japanese have stressed judo as a sport based on jujitsu rather than a defense art, and consequently the word jujitsu remains the only generic term denoting the entire art.

Overlooked today and almost forgotten is the name of Henry Seishiro Okazaki, founder of the American Jiu Jitsu Institute of Hawaii, who deserves more than any other the fame of being first to teach

Jiu Jitsu to any American without distinction as to race, color, or creed.

Even though his distinctive contributions to the introduction and development of Judo and Jiu Jitsu in the United States has been slighted or ignored in the published histories of the martial arts, his system - the Kodenkan - remains the most widely taught system of self-defense Jiu Jitsu in this country today.

Vast Influence

His influence on American professional wrestling has been far more extensive than is generally recognized; his innovations in methods of instructions are widely imitated, and his system of kappos and restorations massage is conceded to be the most complete and effective system of its kind.

The reason for the curious silence on the subject of Master Okazaki seems to stem from the postwar ascendancy of the Kodokan Judo Institute of Japan, which has progressively absorbed or drawn into its sphere of influence most, but not all, of the older Jiu Jitsu schools.

In England the names of Yukio Tani (1899), S.K. Uyenshi (1900), and G. Koizumi (1906), are still known and honored. In France Mikonosuke Kawaishi is credited with having founded a distinctive system of Judo and Jiu

Jitsu adapted to the French temperament.

Both the French and the British Jiu Jitsu systems allied themselves with the Kodokan in the early 1920s for purposes of accreditation and black belt degree registration and consequently adapted the sports Judo curriculum.

The American Jiu Jitsu Institute, however, remained autonomous from its beginning, although Master Okazaki acknowledged, following the visit of Master Kano to his school in Honolulu, that "... what was formerly learned through the practice of Jiu Jitsu has now been reduced to a fine moral principle called Judo - 'the way of gentleness'."

Although he subsequently renamed his school The American Judo and Jiu Jitsu Institute, Okazaki's use of the word Judo indicates he felt it stood for a moral principle rather than a particular school (Ryugi)

Poor Health

Born in Fukushima Prefecture on the Island of Honshu, Japan, January 28, 1890, Henry Okazaki came to Hawaii in 1906, when he was 16 years old. Informed by a doctor that he was suffering from a lung disease, Henry Okazaki took up Jiu Jitsu under Master Kichimatsu Tanaka at the Shinyu-Kai Dojo in an effort to regain his health.

He devoted himself to the martial arts, practicing relen-

tlessly six nights a week, and in the course of time completely recovered. Believing that his new life and superb health were due entirely to the practice of Jiu Jitsu he determined to dedicate the rest of his life to its practice and propagation.

Mastered Arts

During the following years, Master Okazaki studied under various masters in Hilo, Hawaii, and mastered the Yoshin, Iwaga, and Kosogabe schools of Jiu Jitsu. At the same time, he acquired the art of Ryukyuan boxing (Karate) from a Japanese of Okinawa Prefecture, the technique of Filipino knife play from a Filipino, the art of throwing a dirk from Spaniard, the ancient and forbidden deadly art of Lua from a Hawaiian, and the Chinese art of Kung Fu from Master Wo Chong, a 78-year-old Chinese from Kohala.

He did not restrict himself exclusively to oriental martial arts but studied American boxing and wrestling with a view to adapting Jiu Jitsu to American styles of fighting.

Accepts Challenge

In 1921, Okazaki accepted a challenge from a heavyweight professional boxer, K.O. Morris, who claimed to have toured Japan and defeated Judo and Jiu Jitsu men with boxing. Okazaki threw the challenger and broke his arm, decisively defeating his opponent, although sustaining himself a broken nose in the process. This victory did much

to enhance the reputation of Jiu Jitsu in the Islands and abroad.

In 1924 Okazaki toured Japan and studied Shibukawaryu, Yoshin-ryu, and Namba-Shoshin-ryu systems of Jiu Jitsu. At Kodokan he was awarded a rank of 3rd Degree (Sandan)

Busy Trip

While in Japan, he visited more than fifty dojos, mastered 675 different kinds of techniques or forms, and made a special study of kappo and sehukujitsu (restorative massage). Gradually he evolved a system of self-defense Jiu Jitsu comprising courses for men, women and children, and including methods of defense against knife, sword, club, gun, and bayonet.

For a time following his return from Japan, Okazaki taught Jiu Jitsu on Maui, testing and improving his system; then, in 1930, he moved to Honolulu and opened the Nikko Sanatorium of Restoration Massage. Although an acknowledged master masseur, Okazaki lacked business experience and might have failed but for Pete Baron, a prominent masseur and physical culturist in the Islands, who taught him how to operate a massage sanatorium commercially and trained him in Swedish massage techniques. In appreciation, Okazaki offered to teach Baron Jiu Jitsu.

At that time, both Judo and Jiu Jitsu were regarded as secrets to be passed on only to

those of Japanese ancestry, and non-Japanese encountered almost as many obstacles in learning Judo and Jiu Jitsu as, until recently, non-Chinese did in learning about Kung-Fu.

Baron urged Okazaki to throw open Jiu Jitsu instruction to any worthy American regardless of national origin and to train disciples who would introduce Jiu Jitsu throughout the United States

Recognizing the merit of this suggestion, Okazaki agreed and classes began. The first class only had three students who practiced breakfalls on a concrete floor, but realizing that these spartan conditions discouraged new students, Okazaki procured thirty mats.

Builds Gym

His classes attracted so many students that in 1936 he built a gym in Honolulu, which he called the Hawaiian Jiu Jitsu Guild. The name subsequently underwent several changes before finally becoming The American Jiu Jitsu Institute of Hawaii, but literally thousands of students have studied there.

Okazaki called the system he evolved Kodenkan, which he declared embodied the spirit of the hawaiian word kokua - "to operate, or help one another." By helping to teach the junior students under the supervision of the school head, the senior students not only increased their own know-

ledge and improved their own techniques, but also quickly became trained instructors of the courses they mastered.

The system is remarkably simple and ingenious. After strenuous warmup exercises, the beginner first practices breakfalls. The falling techniques resemble those of Aikido more than those of sports Judo, because the emphasis was, then as now, on self-defense rather than sport. To alleviate the tedium of sutemi practice, the beginner is taught the twenty self-defense hand arts called Yawara. Essentially, these arts resemble basic escapes and wrist flexes of Daitoryu Aikijutsu, from which they were originally adapted.

Next Steps

After learning to fall safely, the beginner is taught Nage no Kata - 20 throws, Shime no Kata - 25 submission arts, and Oku no Kata - 25 combination arts. These katas constitute his basic instruction in Judo and are prerequisites from promotion to green belt and third brown belt. In addition he learns the rudiments of massage and lomi-lomi (a Hawaiian massage using the feet) Women may elect to pursue a special course in ladies' Yawara.

As he progresses to senior brown belt rank, the student begins studying the first of the black belt Jiu Jitsu arts, Shinin no Maki; and when he attains black belt rank, he is taught

kappo and restoration massage; the knife, club, and gun defense arts; and the special police arts.

Secret Arts

His instruction in the higher black belt arts continues gradually up to fifth rank and includes two series of secret Jiu Jitsu arts: Shinyo no Maki and Shingin no Maki, as well as Kappo Sappo (cure or kill), for like all the ancient Jiu Jitsu systems, the Okazaki system provides a system of restoration for every deadly art, and the two are taught concurrently.

Thus Judo and Jiu Jitsu were combined into a working art and taught simultaneously.

In spite of opposition from members of his own race, Okazaki persevered, and his system of teaching spread throughout the Islands. Wrestlers on the tour dropped in to observe and remained to study techniques, and consequently the term sutemi for breakfall still survives among American professional wrestlers as do many of the more spectacular throws and mat pins drawn from the advanced katas.

Okazaki became widely known and respected in the Islands, not merely as a teacher of Jiu Jitsu, but as a physical therapist. On one occasion he was called upon to treat President Franklin Deiano Roosevelt, who suffered from insomnia during a state visit to Honolulu.

In the early 30s, Okazaki achieved a brief literary fame when one of his students wrote a science-fiction story for the *Amazing Stories Quarterly* in which one of the characters was based on the professor himself.

Following the attack on Pearl Harbor Okazaki was twice arrested and interned, but his American friends and students quickly came to his rescue and affected his release. The Hawaiian Jiu Jitsu Institute was thrown open to servicemen stationed in the islands, and many studied there.

The influence of his teachings was felt directly and indirectly. Even a casual perusal of Field Manual 21-150, *Unarmed Defense for the American Soldier*, June 30, 1942, reveals to the informed observer that the official basis for self-defense instructions in the U.S. Armed Forces during World War II was the Okazaki Jiu Jitsu System, just as subsequent official changes in the manual reflect the growing post-war influence of the Kodokan Judo Institute of Japan.

Affiliation Problems

The Judo and Jiu Jitsu schools of the Pacific Coast region had been affiliated loosely in a single organization prior to World War II and shortly thereafter. In 1953, one group of Judo teachers trained in Japan sought affiliation with and degree recognition from the Kodokan Judo Institute in

Japan and organized the Judo Black Belt Federation (Yudashakai). They sought to organize Judo on a nationwide basis; to standardize all Judo ranks as authorized by the Kodokan Judo Institute of Japan; to promote and stimulate the growth while maintaining high standards of discipline, skill, proficiency, and training in the true spirit of Judo.

For a time, the Kodokan schools were torn by internal dissension and conflicting loyalties. Consequently on May 21, 1958, the A.J.J.F. incorporated in a determination to make its way independently. It set forth as its purpose "to maintain the highest principles of the science of Judo and Jiu Jitsu and to propagate its teachings and philosophy to all persons regardless of race, color, creed, or religion, and in accordance with democratic American principles."

Master Okasaki died in 1951. His right to overcome a lung disease 45 years earlier had been the opening round in a successful effort to open the door to Judo for thousands of Americans who owe their participation in the martial arts to his world

It is a great debt.