

Danzan Ryu Jujitsu

Welcome to the Koryukan Jujitsu class, designed to present the martial art of Danzan Ryu Jujitsu. Through this class, any goal related to the martial arts can be achieved, including practical self-defense, mental and spiritual growth, physical fitness, exposure to traditional Japanese culture, and competition. What you get out of this class will largely depend on what you put into it, like many things in life. But with the proper dedication and perseverance, the study of Jujitsu can be a challenge lasting a life-time and offering unending rewards.

The idea of our topic of study is embodied in its first syllable, JU, the principle of yielding, suppleness, and giving way. Having this principle as a basis, Jujitsu is often called “The Gentle Art.” The idea of Jujitsu is not to act contrary to an opponent’s strength, but rather make use of it to defeat him. This makes Jujitsu very well adapted for use by the comparatively small and weak against the large and strong. The practitioner of Jujitsu will not fight to make a situation fit a specific technique, but will instead go along with whatever opportunities are presented and use basic principles to create a technique which will fit the situation. Because of this need for adaptability, Jujitsu students are exposed to every aspect of unarmed combat available including throws, joint locks, chokes, strikes, kicks, and weapons among others.

A Brief History of Jujitsu

Across time and cultures, man has developed ways of defending himself from others and even attacking when necessary. Japanese Jujitsu is said to have begun in ancient times when one man killed another by throwing him to the ground and kicking his ribs in a duel. The Japanese martial arts went through various stages of development such as Chikara Kurabe (strength wrestling), Sumo, Yoroi Kumi Uchi (grappling in armor), and others. According to legend, in 880 AD Prince Teijun of the Minamoto clan is said to have begun formal development of an unarmed system of combat. This system would later pass through Minamoto Yoshimitsu to become known as the Daito Ryu Aiki Jujitsu of the Takeda clan (an offshoot of the Minamoto clan). It was a student of Daito Ryu, Morihei Ueshiba, that founded Aikido in the 1930s, and his art remains popular today.

More reliably documented combat systems begin to appear in the 16th century. In 1532, Hisamori Takeuchi, a skilled General, systematized his own form of combat called Takeuchi Ryu. This system contained methods for using the staff, sword, dagger, and unarmed arts. The Takeuchi Ryu went on to greatly influence the development of other schools of Jujitsu.

Our own style of jujitsu is an off-shoot of the Yoshin Ryu. Founded around 1650 by Akiyama Yoshitoki, a Nagasaki physician, this school is known for its vital point striking, joint locks, and chokes. It may or may not be that Akiyama visited China to study martial arts, but it is clear that his medical knowledge is present in his system. While at a mountain retreat developing his art further, Akiyama was inspired by watching the willow trees give way to the building weight of falling snow and avoid broken branches unlike other types of trees. This is where the name Yoshin Ryu, “Willow Spirit School,” comes from.

In the early 1600s, peace came to Japan, and the Samurai had more time to develop fighting systems than to actually use them. At one time, more than 700 documented styles of Jujitsu existed. Most of these were family arts which taught the use of battlefield weapons and tactics, as well as unarmed arts should one be caught without a weapon. Because of this, many Jujitsu techniques are based on motions used elsewhere, such as sword techniques. Then, in 1868, the Samurai were disbanded as a class and carrying swords was prohibited. This period began

the waning of Jujitsu from popularity. Lower class Samurai, who now found themselves without an occupation, often misused their skills to make money. Fights in the streets became common and Jujitsu fell into disrepute. It is for this reason that Jigoro Kano established his own system of Jujitsu called Judo—to distinguish it from Jujitsu. Today in Japan, Jujitsu is rare compared to Judo and Aikido, as they are formulated for mainstream consumption, and do not try to preserve battlefield arts.

History of Danzan Ryu

Professor Henry Seishiro Okazaki was born in Fukushima Prefecture, Japan in 1890, but he and his family moved to Hawaii in 1906. Shortly after, he was diagnosed with a lung disease thought to be Tuberculosis, and was expected to die. “With courage born of desperation,” Prof. Okazaki knocked on the door of Yoshimitsu Tanaka at the Yoshin Kai Dojo, and took up the study of Yoshin Ryu Jujitsu. Shortly after, his Tuberculosis disappeared and his health returned completely. Feeling Jujitsu had saved his life, Prof. Okazaki dedicated the rest of his life to Jujitsu. While in Hawaii, he mastered Yoshin Ryu, Iwaga Ryu, and Kosogabe Ryu Jujitsu. He also studied Kodokan Judo, Chinese Boxing, Filipino Knife and stick fighting, Hawaiian Lua, American Boxing and Wrestling, and Spanish Dirk Throwing. In 1924, Okazaki toured Japan and visited over 50 dojo, learning secret techniques (675 in all) and the art of Kiaijutsu (focusing breath power).

It is from these roots that Danzan Ryu comes. Prof. Okazaki took the crucial step of modernizing the traditional arts he had been taught. He did homage to his roots by retaining a large portion of the Yoshin Ryu curriculum and many of the ceremonial traditions of Japanese culture. Yet he also included pistol defense, wrote the first book on women’s self defense in the US, put together police and commando courses, and, most importantly, began accepting non-Japanese students. By applying the lessons of the past to the problems of his time, he created one of the first modern systems of jujitsu, and certainly the first founded in the United States.

On his return from Japan, Okazaki began teaching. In 1929, he moved from Hilo to Honolulu and opened the Nikko Sanitorium at the old Chester Doyle residence. In the back, he started the Kodenkan (school of ancient traditions), and began teaching his complete Danzan Ryu. Okazaki taught all comers, regardless of race or sex, feeling that everyone could benefit from Jujitsu. For this, he was ostracized by the Japanese community for teaching secrets to the enemy. US servicemen came through the Kodenkan and were issued instructor’s licenses, then returned to the mainland to spread the system. Since those days, several different groups have formed, all teaching what they believed Prof. Okazaki taught. Through his life, Prof. taught thousands of people, established the first American system of Jujitsu, and the oldest martial arts organization outside of Japan. He died from his third stroke in 1951.

Etiquette

Because of its origin in the Samurai arts and culture, Jujitsu systems observe the Japanese traditions of etiquette and respect. Most often, this is done with the bow. The bow is historically a symbol of subjection by the presentation of one’s head in a defenseless position. Since those times, it has come to be considered simply proper manners and is required in many situations. When performing the bow, the practitioner fulfills several functions, most notably showing a heartfelt sign of respect. It can also serve as a pause used to clear the mind, or an acknowledgment of a change in surroundings or mindset. Times requiring a bow are:

- Entering or leaving the Dojo

- Coming on or off the mat
- Beginning or ending a formal class
- Before or after working with a partner
- When a Yudansha (Black Belt) enters the Dojo
- When a weapon changes hands

It is important to realize that a bow is in no way religious, but rather a show of respect and gratitude, and a humbling of the self. According to strict Japanese tradition, those lower in rank or status acknowledge their seniors as higher than themselves, thereby practicing humility. It also makes sense to be polite to someone who stands to teach you things which may save your life on the battlefield. In our society, we are more lax about such things, but on the mat they should be kept in mind. In general, if you are sincerely respectful, you will be fine.

Some forms of etiquette are really for safety purposes. They are as follows:

- Please do not leave the mat without being acknowledged by the instructor once class has opened. This allows people to be tracked.
- When not performing a technique, please sit at the edge of the mat with your legs/feet under you (either on your heels or cross-legged) so they are not landed on.
- When practicing, please pay attention to where your partner will land to avoid collisions. In general, always try to be aware of what is going on around you.
- No jewelry should be worn during class. You don't want to loose it and others don't want to be cut by it.
- Please keep finger and toe nails trimmed and clean.
- If an injury should occur, notify the instructor immediately!

As a general courtesy, please keep your uniform clean and wash it regularly (but do not wash your belt). If you are the type that sweats a lot, please bring a towel. A large part of martial arts training is respect. This includes self-respect, which is demonstrated by a clean appearance, body, and mind.

Attitude

It is my hope that everyone involved with this class can feel like a member of an extended family. We are all here to learn and to help each other learn. Sometimes that means not saying a word, as our own ego is one of the most important things we try to control. Through this class, there will be many opportunities to interact with each other and members of other dojos. Let us all try and benefit from them.

It is important when learning a technique to try and understand the principle behind it, rather than worrying about how fast and hard you can do it. The former approach results in faster learning, the latter in injuries. When you are receiving a technique, don't try to fight the person performing it, but rather try and help them feel the motion. There will be a time to test

your abilities later. This will happen inside rather than outside the dojo. Many of the things we learn are not for public demonstration, only self-defense. In fact, traditionally, a student had to take a blood oath of secrecy before being admitted to a school. Don't worry, we don't go that far.

An important idea to remember in martial arts is that the destination is not the goal. The journey is the goal. We don't go to class to get to a certain point, we go to workout. While a dedicated student will learn many things through the martial arts, the emphasis must be on constant practice. Therefore, we must make the most of the time we have and try to not miss class.

Vocabulary

Numbers		Ranks	
ichi	one	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Belt</u>
ni	two	rokkyu (6th class)	white
san	three	gokyu (5th class)	blue
shi (yon)	four	yonkyu (4th)	green
go	five	sankyu (3rd)	brown
roku	six	nikyu (2nd)	brown
shichi (nana)	seven	ikkyu (1st class)	brown
hachi	eight	shodan (1st grade)	black
ku (kyu)	nine	nidan (2nd grade)	black
ju	ten	sandan (3rd)	black
		yondan (4th)	black
		godan (5th)	black
General			
chugaeri	roll		
deshi	student(s)		
domo arigato gozaimashita	thank you		
	very much		
dozo	please		
gi	uniform		
kiai	focusing shout		
kiotsuke	Attention!		
mate	wait		
mo ichido	once again		
nage	throw		
obi	belt		
rei	bow		
seiza	kneeling posture		
sensei	teacher		
shime	constriction		
shomen ni taishite	face the front		
tori	doer		
uke	receiver		
ukemi	break fall		
yame	STOP!		
yawara	soft		