

HUNAS, HODADS AND OTHER POSERS

By Wm. M. Fischer, Prof.

If there is one thing that the martial arts has, it is honorific titles. We have Renshi, Kyoshi, Hanshi, Shihan, Dai-Shihan, Tasshi, Professor, Senior Professor, Professor Emeritus, Grandmaster, Great Grandmaster, Really Great Grandmaster---the beat goes on. The current *title du jour* popped up only recently in conversation: the title of "Huna."

I had never heard this term and was decidedly curious as to what a Huna was. In researching it on the Internet, I discovered several interesting things. [Wikipedia](#) describes Huna as a "non-native Hawaiian word adopted by Max Long which he coined in 1936 to describe his theory of metaphysics which he linked to ancient Hawaiian "Kahunas," or experts. Huna, the Hawaiian word for "secret," dealt with religious beliefs and practices which Long sought to study. Unfortunately, the Kahunas would not talk to Mr. Long or give him the time of day. Notwithstanding the above, Long had a "revelation" in 1934 that the religious practices were encoded in the Hawaiian language itself. Later Huna teachers linked Huna to aliens from certain star systems or connections with India or West Africa.

Despite the supposed link to Hawaii, Hawaiian scholars state categorically that Huna study is not, and never was, Hawaiian. Those connected with Max Long and Huna research, however, promote Huna as a source of empowerment, spirituality, energy and metaphysical healing powers--something what you might get when you mix Tony Robbins and poi. In essence, a Huna is some sort of way to channel the power of positive thinking into a healing energy and, simply put, the new title of Huna is equated with "healer."

While I found this mildly fascinating, I could not bring myself to order the free CD from Huna.com (which would have put me on a list that assured endless phone calls and e-mails hawking "Just in to the Huna Store!"). What can be more fascinating than chanting my way to better health, you ask? It is that some have now endowed themselves with the title of "Huna" or "Healer" within the martial arts community.

That thought brought me back down Memory Lane to my very short-lived connection to surfing in the '60's. It was the time of the Beach Boys, the Surfaris and Jan & Dean. Being a surfer in high school was instant popularity. I owned the requisite surfboard, 9 feet, 6 inches in length, and had the requisite surf rack on my car. Canvas swim trunks, complete with stripe?--you bet! St. Christopher surfer medal?--never traveled to the beach without it! Wet suit jacket?--absolutely! Deep tan?--one of the best! An ability to stay on the surfboard?--not a prayer.

In looking back, I was what was termed a "hodad." A hodad, for those of you that missed the 60's (or attended too many Pink Floyd concerts and have blown out memories in that wing of the brain), was someone who posed as a surfer. As a matter of fact, I believe the current vernacular for a hodad is "poser." It was not that I wanted to be a hodad. I certainly spent time in the water trying not to be.

However, I could not stay on a surfboard if my feet were Super Glued to it. That summer, I traded my canvas trunks for a judogi and a white belt.

I suppose that's why the use of the term, Huna, struck me so. Call me skeptical or a non-believer. I see those who fancy the new title as today's "hodad healers" who use the Hawaiian word as a connection to the Sandlewood Mountains, despite the fact that there is little, if any, nexus. In that Huna is "secret," it creates the new esoteric inner circle. The self-described Hunas hang onto the Hawaiian word like it was a longboard, for all to see--on the highway but not in the water. Moreover, it suggests considerable arrogance that a person would self-designate himself with a title. As I sit here, I see it as silly. If I really put thought into it, I suppose that I would find it sad. Then again, the road to enlightenment, I am told, is difficult--and virtually impossible without the free CD

POST SCRIPT: The most important, most honorific of all titles? Yes, campers, It's "sensei."

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