

A Look at the Danzan Ryu 'Ohana Black Belt Weekend 2013

Written by Chris Nicholas, Rokudan

Photos courtesy of Ernie DeMoss



In almost any Martial Arts Event, there are certain moments that stand out. That was not the case this past weekend, however. Every moment stood out!!!!!! The Danzan Ryu 'Ohana Black Belt Weekend saw 15 Professors sharing their knowledge with 66 black belts in three different classrooms in one of the most unique formats I have ever seen. There were Professors and Students from the Pacific Jujitsu Alliance, Kilohana Martial Arts Association, Shoshin Ryu Yudanshaki, American Jujitsu Institute, Jujitsu American, American Judo & Jujitsu Federation and Bushidokan Federation. And at the end of the first day, it peaked in an historic moment.

On Saturday morning we knew it was going to be a great day, although a bit hot with temperatures in the 90's. It started with the bow in and explanation of the day's events. Then Prof Bill Fischer gave an outstanding lecture on Ethics in the Martial Arts. After that, the group split up and started to get sweaty. Shinin No Maki and Shinyo No Maki split into three rooms. All rooms had two main Professors in charge but the doors were kept open and the other Professors would wander in to share their perspective on an art they truly loved. All the different Professors working together in all the different classes so that everyone benefited, no matter which classroom they were in.



After the first set of classes, it was time to cool down a bit as Prof. McKean shared concepts of Dojo Management. It was an open forum as students asked questions but also shared their experiences of what worked and what did not when running a school. Then it was off for a quick lunch and back on the mat for Prof Mike Esmailzadeh who discussed the techniques of teaching.

Then time to ramp it up again, as half the group trained the back half of Shinyo No Maki while the other half were shown how to take Shime No Kata and Oku No Kata to the next level. Prof Ingebretsen and Prof Ken Eddy led Shinyo No Maki as Prof McKean and Prof Coelho raised our awareness in the Shime and Oku class. As I worked in the Shime/Oku class, Prof James Muro would share little tidbits of knowledge with me and my best friend, Mike Tucker. This knowledge came at a price though as we were then asked to demonstrate those enhancements to the class at large so that everyone got a new perspective on the arts.



Finally the day concluded with Tessen No Maki, Tanto No Maki, and Diato No Maki. No one was left wanting in those classes as the Professors Esmailzadeh, Jenkins, Nolte, Shehorn, Spencer and Eddy shared these traditional arts...but with a little twist here and there to take things up a notch.

When it was time to call it a day, we gathered in the main room to bow out. But first the three host organizations, Shoshin Ryu, Kilohana, and Pacific Jujitsu Alliance awarded some special promotions to a few of their Black Belts. It was at this point we witnessed history as Prof Larry Nolte received his Hachidan. Prof Nolte, who is Senior Instructor at the Medford Judo Academy (the oldest Danzan Ryu School still open and in the same location), received his Shodan from Prof. Bud Estes in 1960. Prof Nolte was praised by Prof Muro and Prof Rebmann for his years of devotion to Danzan Ryu Jujitsu. But it didn't stop there as Prof Fischer then announced that this quiet and humble man was this year's inductee to the Danzan Ryu Jujitsu's Hall of Fame!!!!



After an evening of camaraderie, we were back on the mat Sunday Morning. Sensei Ashley Rebmann shared the Children's Program developed by Prof Ray Law, still in use today in Prof Rebmann's club. Then it was time to get busy with Tanju No Maki and Hawaiian Hanbo. This class was followed by an Open Forum class where all the Professors shared the mat and taught their favorite techniques. After a slightly longer lunch, Prof Ingebretsen brought out the torture sticks and cement blocks to finish the day with sore ears and crumbled concrete.



I have fun at almost every event I go to. This was no exception. The camaraderie, combined with the high level of instruction made for an outstanding training environment. If this was any indication of what to expect in 2014, I am excited for the big 'Ohana event next June. Mark you calendars, you are not going to want to miss it!!!!!!

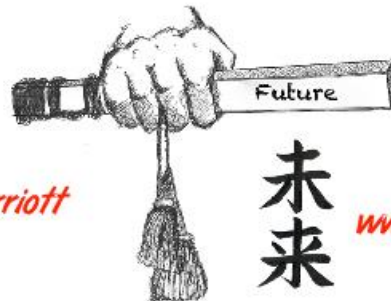


Congratulations to all those who received rank promotions this weekend: Erik Smith – Shodan, Jose Benham – Nidan, Nancy Soares – Sandan, Kathleen Nicholas – Yodan, Ashley Rebmann – Godan, Charles Goodman – Rokudan, Mike Tucker – Rokudan, Chris Nicholas – Rokudan, Prof. Larry Nolte – Hachidan

A special thanks to Leslee Kufferath who was on hand to give massages in the method taught to her by her father, Senior Professor Sig Kufferath.

'Ohana 2014

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*Santa Clara Marriott
Santa Clara, CA*

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