

# What the *Kodokan* Knows about Professor Okazaki and *Danzan-ryu Jujutsu*

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*Danzan-ryu Jujutsu*

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On a February, 2013, trip to Japan, Jun Shimada, a Japanese friend who translated one of my books into Japanese, arranged for the two of us to visit the *Kodokan* to talk with the librarian, Ms. Hanako Motohashi. I was interested in verifying Professor Okazaki's judo rank and in investigating the names and kanji of the higher boards.

Before continuing, you need to know that decisive answers are hard to find in Japan. Ambiguity is a part of the culture, and answers are usually followed by some sort of qualification. In other words, we may never get definitive answers to many of our questions about *Danzan-ryu*, although we may get evidence that makes some answers more believable than others.

## Professor Okazaki's *Judo* Rank

We have long been told that Professor Okazaki was promoted to *sandan* by Professor Kano. There was also speculation that this rank may have been awarded in Hawaii as a “*batsugun*” promotion, or promotion for winning contests against several consecutive judoka of the same rank in a single event rather than by a rank exam or by participation in a certain number of matches.

The *Kodokan* has kept meticulous records of promotion for close to 100 years. A search of these records revealed that Okazaki Seishiro joined the *Kodokan* on December 15, 1924, and was awarded the rank of *shodan* on January 11, 1925 (Figure 1). The *kanji* for Professor Okazaki's name are identical to those appearing on a scroll signed by Professor Okazaki, the *Goshin Jutsu no Kata Moku Roku* (Figure 2). However, the two *kanji* in his first name differ from those he used in signing his other *mokuroku* and *kaidensho* (Figure 3), which also differ from those he used in signing his book. (No sense in making this easy.) There is no record of him receiving a *sandan* or any other rank from the *Kodokan*.

## Names and Kanji for the Higher Boards

I also asked Motohashi-san about the names and possible *kanji* for the higher boards. The time between Professor Okazaki ending his training as a student and beginning his teaching of *Danzan-ryu* was only a few years. When *Danzan-ryu* was introduced, however, it was essentially in final form. The techniques may vary somewhat by instructor, but the boards have never changed. My thought was that creating such stability in so short a period could be

explained if Okazaki included blocks of techniques from other, fully formed systems. For example, most techniques on *Nage* and *Shime* also appear on the *Kodokan* judo lists.

## Shinyo no Maki

We know that Professor studied with Master Kichimatsu Tanaka at the *Shinyu-Kai Dojo*, where he learned *Yoshin-ryu jujutsu*, a *ryu* with which Motohashi-san is familiar. *Yoshin-ryu* has a list of techniques called *Shinyo no Maki*: 心用乙巻 (or 心用之巻, which uses a different *kanji* for “no.”). In her opinion, the *kanji* for our Shinyo list would likely be the same as these *kanji*. However (See? I told you . . .), she also suggested another set of *kanji* for this list: 真楊ノ巻.

The next step is to determine what techniques are associated with *Yoshin-ryu's Shinyo No Maki*. If the techniques are similar to ours (difficult to characterize, but techniques of strategy and tactics), it may well be that Professor Okazaki adopted or adapted this list in creating his own.

## Shingen no Maki

Some time ago, I found on an Internet search a mention of *Shin-gen no Maki* (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sōsuishi-ryū>). An excerpt from the Wikipedia entry is below.

### Matsui Hyakutaro Munetada

“Munetada was born native to Kyūshū, Japan in Fukuoka on February of Genji year 1 (1864). He was the first son of Matsui Kakitsu who was the samurai of Fukuoka han. As a boy he was fascinated with the martial arts so he started to train with his uncle Matsui Kokichi, a *Shingen No Maki* (similar to *Menkyo Kaiden*) and direct student of Sōsuishi-ryū under 11th generation inheritor Shitama Munetsuna. Munetada also began training under Shitama Munetsuna and received a *Shingen No Maki* in Sōsuishi-ryū. His line of Sōsuishi-ryū is called the “*Matsui-ha*” and it continues in Tokyo today . . .”

Grandmaster Maasaki Hatsumi, of *ninjutsu* fame, confirmed that this rank was awarded in Sōsuishi-ryū.

Sōsuishi-ryū is the modern name of Sōsuishitsu-ryū. (The name was changed to remove the “tsu” ending that created an offending syllable.) Sōsuishitsu-ryū is listed in Professor Okazaki’s *mokuroku* as one of the many traditional *jujutsu ryu*. Clearly, he knew of the *ryu*.

The *Shingen No Maki* certificate of Sōsuishi-ryū is of interest because, like our own list of the same name, it is the highest certificate awarded by the *ryu* and contains the most secret techniques of the *ryu*.

I contacted two people whom I know practice Sōsuishi-ryū. *Judoka* and author Pat Harrington of the New South Wales area of Australia and Rory Miller of Portland, Oregon. Neither had ever heard of the *Shingen No Maki* rank or certificate.

From memory, Motohashi-san quickly suggested two sets of *kanji* for this list: 森 巖 / 卷 and 深 巖 / 卷.

The next step, again, is to determine what techniques are associated with *Sōsuishi-ryū's Shingen No Maki*. If the techniques are similar to ours (striking points and techniques), it may well be that Professor Okazaki adopted or adapted this list in creating his own.

## Shinin no Maki

My friend Shimada-san found an article on *Danzan-ryu* written in Japanese that mentioned Takeru Sasaki, a man who studied *Danzan Ryu* in Reno, Nevada, under Robert Kolbet, a student of Herb Lague, many years ago. He now teaches in Tokyo. I contacted him and received the following.

“I think ‘*Shin-In*’ was originally pronounced ‘*Shin-kage*.’ The word ‘*Kage*’ can be also pronounced ‘*In*’; therefore, *Kage* changed into *In* during long time. I think ‘*Shin-In*’ or ‘*Shin-kage*’ was concerned with *Shin-kage ryu*. *Shin-kage ryu* is very famous Japanese traditional martial arts school. Please see this site; <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shinkage-ry%C5%AB>”

I had not heard of this possibility and have not had time to investigate it. The one book in my library on *Shin-kage ryu* (*Shin Kage Ryu: Japan's Complete Fighting system*, by Robin L. Rielly, Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle, 1989) shows no similarities to either the history of *Danzan-ryu* or to the techniques of our *Shinin no Maki*.

## Closing

Motohashi-san has given me leads to experts in the *Yoshin-ryū* and *Sōsuishi-ryū*. My friend Shimada-san is also now hooked on solving the mystery. I would not have gotten this far without him and will probably not get further without him, either. The need to consult native Japanese speakers and those with expertise in martial arts is essential to this research. Simply making the connections to experts in Japan requires a native speaker, and Shimada-san has been incredibly helpful in this regard. We owe him a debt of gratitude.

So, aside from verifying the *shodan* promotion for Professor Okazaki, the above findings raise more questions than they answer. I emphasize that I have not found definitive answers for the meaning or *kanji* of the higher boards, although I think the similarities mentioned above are most interesting. Finding answers is possible: we still have places to look.

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 入門許可年月日 : 24/12/15 段 承認日 推薦団体 証No. 摘要  
 本籍(県) : 15 東京 初段 25/01/11 99 KDK  
 現住所 〒 :  
 漢字 :  
 カナ :  
 氏名(漢字) : 岡崎 清四郎  
 (誤字) :  
 (カナ) : オカザキ セイシロ  
 生年月日 : 0/00/44  
 性別 : 1 男  
 職業 :  
 段位 : 01 初段  
 願書届出年月日 : 0/00/00  
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Figure 1. A printout of the *Kodokan*'s record verifying that Professor Okazaki received the rank of *shodan* on January 11, 1925. The date he joined the *Kodokan* is indicated in the upper-left corner (24/12/15), and the date of the promotion is indicated in the upper-right corner (25/1/11). The KDK indicates that the promotion was made at the *Kodokan*. The first five kanji to the right of the dotted line read Okazaki Seishiro. Professor Okazaki was also visiting Japan on those dates. The *Kodokan* has no other record for Professor Okazaki. I asked specifically about the *sandan* rank and was told that there is no record of Professor Okazaki receiving that or any other rank from the *Kodokan*.

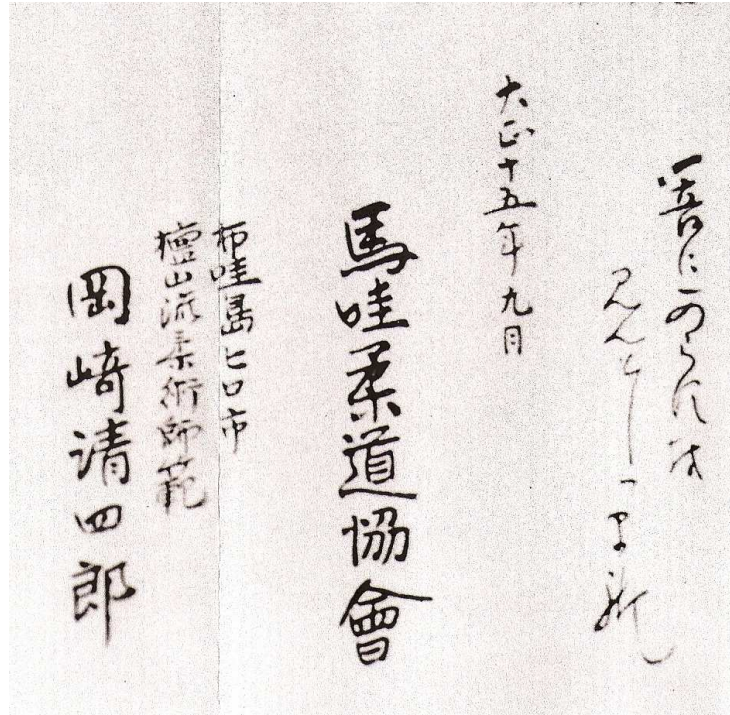


Figure 3. Professor Okazaki's signature (far left line) on his *Goshin Jutsu no Kata Moku Roku*. The *moku roku* is dated September, 1927. These kanji are identical to the ones on the Kodokan's record of his shodan promotion.

The *kanji* Professor Okazaki used to sign his scroll, *Goshin Jutsu no Kata Moku Roku*, are identical to those on the *Kodokan's* record of his shodan promotion.

岡	oka - hill
崎	zaki - promontory
清	sei - pure
四	shi - four
郎	rō - counter for sons

The *kanji* for Professor Okazaki's first name on most of his other *mokuroku*.

岡	oka - hill
崎	zaki - promontory
星	sei - sunny; bright
史	shi - history
郎	rō - counter for sons

Figure 3. Professor Okazaki used at least sets of *kanji* for his first name. The *kanji* on the *Kodokan's* record are the same as those he used to sign the *Goshin Jutsu no Kata Moku Roku*. (Translation courtesy of Professor Tom Jenkins.)

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本籍(県) : 15 東京 初段 25/01/11 99 KDK  
現住所 〒 :  
漢字 :

カナ :

氏名(漢字) : 岡崎 清四郎  
(誤字) :  
(カナ) : カザキ セイジ  
生年月日 : 0/00/44  
性別 : 1 男  
職業 :  
段位 : 01 初段  
願書届出年月日 : 0/00/00  
死亡日付 : 000000  
摘要 :  
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