

The Soke Proclamation of Hachiro Okazaki The Untold Story

By Bob McKean

Part I

Professor Gene Edwards - vs. - The AJJF Board of Professors

While investigating the fraudulent Estes kaidensho certificate in 2010, I found some rather disturbing improprieties with a document that has been around the DZR community for over 20 years. A document known as the “Soke” Proclamation or the “Official” Proclamation has been hanging on the walls of many AJJF schools since the early 1990s. I have discovered there are actually two “Soke” Proclamations, an original version and a version that was improperly and wrongfully altered by Senior Professor Lamar Fisher and passed off as being authentic.

This is the first of several articles about the history of this document and how it has been misused, covered up and wrongfully explained to the AJJF membership and the DZR community.

The Board of Professors of the American Judo & Jujitsu Federation wrote and published an article titled, *The Proclamation of Hachiro Okazaki*. This article appeared in the Fall 2010 issue of the *Kiai Echo*, a publication of the American Judo & Jujitsu Federation, and has been placed on the AJJF website, www.ajjf.org. The BOP was negligent and irresponsible in writing and publishing this article. The AJJF membership and the DZR community should be outraged about this piece of DZR history being falsely recorded, altered, misrepresented and distributed to the AJJF membership and the DZR community.

The following is a January 30, 2011 letter from Professor Gene Edwards to the Directors of Internal Relations of the American Judo & Jujitsu Federation. A signed copy of this letter was sent to me as a cc: by Professor Edwards.

I am writing this letter in response to the article “THE PROCLAMATION OF HACHIRO OKAZAKI”, which appeared in the Fall 2010 issue of the *Kiai Echo* of the AJJF, Page 3. The author(s) of the article are unknown with credit assigned to “The AJJF Board of Professors”, so I presume they all share “credit” equality.

The story begins NOT in March of 1980 but in correspondence to Hachiro prior to 1978, when I initiated the independent Okazaki Biographical Research Team (OBRT) with approval from Prof. Estes. The team consisted of myself, Lora Prevette (Later Lora Edwards – July 1983), Tom and Kristine King. Using entirely our own funds we financed the trips to Hawaii and all activities, purchases, document copies, photos, etc. of the OBRT. The relationships fostered with Hachiro began with the OBRT, NOT AT THE AJJF NATIONAL CONVENTION OF MARCH 1980. On the initial trip to Hawaii we spent over 10 days conducting extensive interviews and gathering a great deal of information. Many hours in the evenings were spent with Hachiro around his kitchen table. In most of these sessions Keith was not in attendance. We also went out to dinner with Hachi and Ruth and informally continued our discussions.

It was during these many meetings that Hachi gave us the Chops and many other items. We explained that we did not want these things as we were writing a book, not starting a museum. Despite our repeated refusal, he insisted that we take them and preserve them. I did not know Hachi's mind, but we finally relented and took them and agreed that we would honor his request, treating these items as a sacred trust.

While Bob Krull and Rich Borba were involved in the fishing trips later on, detailed discussions of Jujitsu and arrangements to meet with Prof. Estes were all arranged by me, not Bob and Rich. Hachi originally asked me to teach him Shingin, but I said that instruction in these arts would best be done by Prof. Estes. Hachi asked if Bud would be willing to do this. I told him that I would contact Prof. about this. I did and Prof. Estes replied enthusiastically "Yes". I notified Hachi and a date was set for him to come to the mainland and meet with Prof. Estes.

Hachi by the way was a house guest of mine and attended and guest taught at my college Jujitsu classes. Lora and I loved and respected him. As far as the OBRT team is concerned, both Tom and Kris quit early on, and left Lora and I running the program. Then Lora passed in 2004. I continue the work and have enlisted others to help.

The conceptualization, inception, construction, and production of the "Proclamation" was entirely mine. No one else had any input into it. It had nothing to do with any conversations between Prof. Fisher, Prof. Estes, or Hachiro. Since I was loyal to the AJJF and felt that the AJJF had done more to preserve the DZR system than any other group, I felt that a proclamation of some sort would be appropriate from the founder's son to the BOD/BOP of the AJJF.

The first step was to contact Hachi and ask if this was something he felt would be appropriate. He said it was and I explained that I would begin writing the proclamation and then send it to him for his feedback and hopefully his approval. The wording of the proclamation I typed out to Hachi is exactly as it appears on the official proclamation. They are all my words. We talked on the phone and he agreed that the proclamation was appropriate and that he would sign it. By agreement, it was NOT to have any AJJF Professor names on it. The successor was to be the entire AJJF BOP. By this time the AJJF was recognizing Profs. from other groups. It was my hope that the Professors of the other DZR organizations would ultimately be recognized as members of the AJJF BOP in a unified group to lead DZR into the 21st Century.

The layout, type set, borders, colors, design, etc. on the “Proclamation” were all of my choice. At this point I enlisted the help of two of my Black Belts, Jon Falconer and Duane Wieden. They proceeded to contact a silk screener who could perform the work on high quality Japanese rice paper. Duane examined many samples of rice paper. Many were too expensive for the task. I believe we finally settled on the paper that was about \$30 a sheet. As I recall we contracted for 10 copies to be screened. We covered all the costs. Copies were sent to Hachi and signed June 12, 1991, and returned to me. I gave copies to the AJJF BOD.

The most critical point in the proclamation to me was the 7th:

“Whereas the American Judo and Jujitsu Federation has committed itself to the highest standards of honesty, integrity, and service on behalf of Danzan Ryu and Kodengan...”

When Prof. Fisher took a copy of the proclamation to Hachi with Prof. Fisher’s chops on it proclaiming himself to be “Soke”, Hachi was humiliated. This was NOT Hachi’s intent as clearly on the proclamation. Always the gentleman, Hachi posed for a picture with Prof. Fisher holding the now “fraudulent” document copy.

In summation, the Kiai Echo article is a collection of distortions, half truths, and misinformation. Had any member of the AJJF BOP come to me and asked for my explanation of the actual events, I would have provided it for them. Let’s see if they will now publish a correction with the truth.

I resigned from the AJJF BOP in the early 90’s because I was moving to Montana and would be unable to actively participate on the Board. I still have a copy of the memo I sent to Prof. Fisher. But instead of accepting my resignation from the BOP, the senior AJJF Professors regularly announced my resignation at conventions and other events that I had quit the AJJF and that I was no longer active in Jujitsu. My Black Belts who attended some of these functions informed me of these lies. As a Prof. in the AJJF you are a member for life. But my Kiai Echo was discontinued, probably more out of spite than anything else.

Prof. Estes, before he passed, told me on many occasions that he was humiliated by several of his top professors: that they had lied to him and about him, had even cheated him and even stolen money from him. He told me he was sorry he ever promoted these people. He told me that they would continue their reprehensible behavior and then I would leave the AJJF. He was absolutely right on. I could list hundreds of examples but (1) the misuse of the Okazaki chops to perpetrate a major fraud related to the phony kaidensho, and (2) the fraudulent “Proclamation” altered by Prof. Fisher, are just samples. The failure of the BOP to set the record straight on a timely basis related to these items is another.

I am embarrassed and humiliated to have been associated with these people. I am sorry I ever made “*The Proclamation*” and that I allowed a “*friend*” to borrow the Okazaki chops. I had hoped for “*honesty*” and “*integrity*”.

The following article was published in the Fall 2010 issue of the Kiai Echo – a publication of the American Judo & Jujitsu Federation. It was also posted on the AJJF website, www.ajjf.org. The entire BOP takes credit for writing this article. I believe it was written by one Professor and approved by the rest of the BOP. Who checked out the sources of information before the article was approved? Why didn't the author contact Professor Gene Edwards? After all, Professor Edwards is only person still alive who was directly involved with the document? Why wasn't the entire truth told about Senior Professor Lamar Fisher's involvement in altering the document published?

In 1992, Professor Tom Jenkins wrote a detailed memo to the Board of Professors about the "Soke" Proclamation. Why didn't the 1992 BOP act on his recommendations? The 2010 BOP was given a copy of his 1992 memo. Why didn't they act on his recommendations? This memo, and the story around it, will be presented in another article.

The Proclamation of Hachiro Okazaki

The AJJF Board of Professors

In March 1980 Hachiro Okazaki, the son of our Founder, came to the AJJF National Convention and shared his aloha and ohana with his larger DZR/AJJF family! He demonstrated his masterful massage arts and told many stories about his family and his father. He told us over and over how very happy he was to see so many eager students practicing his father's beloved DZR system, and that he was sure his father was smiling from heaven to see his system flourishing. This was a marvelous and remarkable occasion for us all, where new friendships were forged.

Following this event an important document was created, in which Hachiro proclaimed that the AJJF was the steward and standard-bearer of the DZR system that his father had created. After this document was made public, there was some confusion as to its intent and the AJJF's purpose in having it made. In order to understand this, the whole story must be told.

Back in the 70's Prof Gene Edwards and fellow avid fishermen Bob Krull and Rich Borba nurtured a friendship with Hachiro. During their fishing trips, discussions would come up about Hachiro's father, Danzan Ryu, Seifukujitsu, and so forth. Over time it became apparent that Hachiro felt a bit sad that he had not completed his own training in DZR while his father was alive. While he certainly had learned and mastered the healing arts, he felt that his understanding of how these arts fit in with the advanced jujitsu arts contained in his father's system was somehow incomplete. During these discussions it was suggested that possibly Prof Bud Estes might be willing to teach Hachiro the advanced aspects of DZR and how the jujitsu arts are interconnected with the healing arts.

Bud Estes readily agreed to share his knowledge with Hachiro, and we know that the exchange between them was a great success and that the two men became quite close in the process. Those of us who were aware of this exchange knew that these teaching occasions were of such import and value that we all felt goose skin just thinking about it.

In our eyes the exchange was truly historic and now legendary. Prof. Estes was known to say. "It completed the circle."

We do not "own" the system, and our Senior Professor is not the only Inheritor of it. We freely share this great responsibility with the other DZR Senior Professors and their organizations.

We presume that it was from these interactions between Hachiro and Prof. Estes that the idea of a "Proclamation" came into being. It should be pointed out that Hachiro hatched this idea in concert with Senior Professor Lamar Fisher, as Prof. Estes had already passed away. For Hachiro, it was the fulfillment of a long held wish for his father's dream to be preserved and realized. In the creation of this document, Hachiro and Prof Fisher had decided that the Senior Professor of the AJJF would thereafter be known as "Soke" — or "owner" of the system. Unfortunately, the use of this word in the document is where the confusion and misunderstanding began many years ago.

The current Board of Professors of the AJJF views Hachiro's Proclamation as an important part of our history, and as a testament of our commitment to the Founder's dream to preserve and propagate his martial art and healing art system in all states of the Union. We feel honored that his son felt moved to make such a Proclamation, and we have taken the responsibility it publicly declares very seriously. However, we acknowledge how the use of the word "Soke" in the document could easily be misconstrued and cause hard feelings among all the other DZR organizations and Shihan doing their part to preserve and propagate the system. We do not "own" the system, and our Senior Professor is not the only Inheritor of it. We freely share this great responsibility with the other DZR Senior Professors and their organizations.

There is a version of this Proclamation that shows the impressions of two "chops" (a chop is a signature stamp in Japanese kanji used by the author of a document to show its authenticity). One of these chops is Professor Lamar Fisher's personal name stamp. The other one designates him as "the third Soke of Danzan Ryu." These two stamps were probably added to the document since Prof Fisher was our Senior Professor at that time, and the head of the AJJF — but no one knows for sure. The current AJJF Board of Professors does not want to make or imply an endorsement of these chopped versions of the Proclamation, and considers these documents to be inaccurate — and all such documents should be replaced with the original unchopped version.

It must be stated again that Hachiro's Proclamation came at a time in which strong friendships were being nurtured. It was a time of coming together in the spirit of kokua, and especially ohana. It was never intended to be anything more than a public statement of our undying friendship with the Okazaki family that had occurred in special times and circumstances. This Proclamation now stands as a testament to our organization's mission to preserve and promote Master Henry S. Okazaki's Danzan Ryu martial art and healing art system internationally.

Part II

1992 Memo to the BOP

According to AJJF Professor Tom Jenkins, he first heard “rumors” about the “Soke” Proclamation just prior to it being announced in the Fall 1991 issue of the Kiai Echo. After looking at the “Soke” Proclamation he found several misrepresentations. The word “Soke” was being misused and he believed it would do more harm than good to the American Judo & Jujitsu Federation and to the Danzan Ryu community.

In 1992, Professor Jenkins presented a report to the Board of Professors of the American Judo & Jujitsu Federation about the “Soke” Proclamation. This report was again presented to the Board of Professors in 2010.

Was the report written by Professor Jenkins ever considered by the Board of Professors in 1992 and 2010? Was the information in this report ignored or dismissed when the BOP wrote their article, *The Proclamation of Hachiro Okazaki*, which appeared in the fall 2010 issue of the Kiai Echo?

During the August 8, 2010 meeting with Professor Ball, Professor Carr, Professor Nolte and Professor Hodgkin, I asked the following question about the “Soke” Proclamation.

McKean: I have attached a copy of the 1992 report written by Professor Jenkins concerning the "Soke" Proclamation. You and Professor Carr said you did not remember this report ever being presented to the BOP. I would suggest a copy be given to all the members of the BOP prior to your September meeting so everyone has ample time to read and study the material.

Prof. Ball: Again, your opinion is noted. They will have this in hand by the Sept. mtg.

Professor Tom Jenkins gave his permission for me to reprint his September 1992 letter to the Board of Professors of the American Judo & Jujitsu Federation.

September 1992

From: Professor Tom Jenkins, a member of the board of directors of the American Judo and Jujitsu Federation.

To: The Board of Directors of the American Judo and Jujitsu Federation.

Re: The following are my thoughts concerning the "soke proclamation" and its effects on the entire Kodenkan Jujitsu family. This discussion is focused on the problems that this view has caused to this point in time. It is written in a spirit of compassion to all concerned with the hope of resolution of the problem by all.

The official "PROCLAMATION" of Soke
with a response from the editor

Statement 1: Whereas "Henry" Seishiro Okazaki (1890-1951) created and established the Danzan Ryu (Cedar Mountain Style) Jujitsu in the 1920's in Honolulu, Hawaii,

Response 1: This is basically a true statement. Actually he founded the "Sandalwood Mountain System." Sandalwood is a sweet smelling type of cedar tree that the Chinese denuded in the Hawaiian islands to export back to China. Because of this the Chinese called the Hawaiian Islands "Danzan", the Sandalwood Mountain.

Statement 2: Whereas "Henry" Seishiro Okazaki began teaching Danzan Ryu Jujitsu at his school, the Kodenkan (School of the ancient Tradition), to Merlin "Bud" Estes, Richard Rickerts, Danzel Mugsy, Bob Glover, Don Carver, Charlie Wagner, and "Curly" Freidman, circa 1929,

Response 2: The chronological order of the students appears to be incorrect. In an interview with Richard Rickerts, he told me that he began his study of Kodenkan Jujitsu in 1932 and that Merlin "Bud" Estes came to study in 1936. Bud Estes taught me that Richard Rickerts was his "senior". From picture evidence it appears that the first mokuroku or teaching scrolls were given on March 15, 1938 to Richard Rickerts and others. Bud Estes was awarded his scroll a year later on March 8, 1939.

Statement 3. Whereas Merlin "Bud" Estes, and Richard Rickerts continued to practice and teach Danzan Ryu Jujitsu, and in conjunction with Ray Law and John Cahill, help to found the first and later Danzan Ryu Jujitsu organizations, culminating with the incorporation of the American Judo and Jujitsu Federation in 1958, a California Nonprofit Corporation,

Response 3. This statement shows the historical growth of Danzan Ryu on the U.S. Mainland but fails to point out that at the same time the "Hawaiian Jujitsu Guild", later to become the "American Jujitsu Institute", would continue master Okazaki's teachings from Hawaii with a signed charter from the professor himself. Here are some of the great people and teachers of Master Okazaki that was omitted. I apologize for not having a more complete list as I am sure there are many more names that could be added here: Mr. Bill Ahmoo, Mr. Marion Anderson, Mr. Bernard Baptiste, Mr. Carl Beaver, Mr. Steve Byzek, Mr. Don Carver, Mr. Chowhoon, Mr. Bob Glover, Mr. Juan Gomes, Mr. Anton Gonzales, Mr. Joe Holck, Mrs. Bernice Jay, Mr. William Montero, Mr. Wally Jay, Mr. Sig Kufferath, Mr. Bing Lau, Mr. Francisco Limbago, Mr. Sam Luke, Mr. Tony Muran, Mss. Betty Okazaki, Mrs. Esther Okazaki Takamoto, Mr. Richard Takamoto, Mr. Toru Tanaka, Mr. Charles Wagner, Mr. Jack Wheat

Statement 4. Whereas "Henry Seishiro Okazaki" gave Merlin "Bud" Estes the title of "kyoshi" (teachers of teachers), and

Response 4. Professor Merlin "Bud" Estes to my knowledge was never given the title of "kyoshi or kiyoshi" as understood to mean a very high teaching title. "Bud" Estes was a minister and missionary for the Salvation Army Church when he went to Hawaii. In 1980 I was with professors Bernard Baptiste and Bud Estes in Miami Florida at the A.A.U. convention. In conversation they reminisced on their life in Honolulu Hawaii. Bud and Bernard's brother who was Bud's best friend were members of the Salvation Army Church. They were also members of the Salvation Army band. On Sunday morning after services they would march down the streets

of Honolulu in the band. Teachers would often give their students nicknames to fit a certain characteristic of their personality. The word "kyoshi" in this context is most appropriate for it means a "minister or missionary.

This very same word can mean a "teacher" which in the "kyu-dan" rank system that was set up by judo master Jigoro Kano would be a seventh or eighth degree black belt. See "secrets of the samurai, page 163. As I recall, Bud told me that he was called "kyoshi" when he was a brown belt. "Bud" was always known for his service to humanity that is why they called him "Bud". If master Okazaki called "Bud" Estes "kyoshi" meaning a high teacher, then he would have been obligated to call other students by this teaching title when they reached the same rank as "Bud". To my limited knowledge no one was called this except the "missionary" Bud Estes. If "Bud" was given title as a "kyoshi" the master teacher, then master Okazaki would have given him a certificate to declare it. To my knowledge he gave him no such certificate. Professor Bud Estes needed no certificate. His life, love and dedication to Master Okazaki and all Danzan Ryu family was declared by his life. His life was a living certificate that was done daily. He died in Corning New York on June 7, 1981 after teaching Danzan Ryu jujitsu all day. He told me several times that was the way he wanted to go. His example to me is that you should never ask for rank or title but seek to serve without letting anyone know about your service. Mr. Hachiro Okazaki relates that "dad named Bud Estes "kiyoshi" which means clean and pure. A very befitting name to the very end." See kiai echo, 1981 summer, memorial edition.

Statement 5. Whereas "kyoshi" are considered "of expert fighting skill", are "shihan" (role model to others; a master of the art in esoteric and physical sense) or higher; and "kyoshi" are often appointed "soke dai" (the named heir apparent),

Response 5. This statement here is predicated on the previous statement which has no solid evidence. There is no evidence that "Bud" Estes ever received a "kyoshi", a high teacher's title from Master Okazaki. Any further projection from this point is based on assumption. In the mokuroku, the teaching scroll, and the kaidensho, the master teaching license, master Okazaki never referred to himself or anyone else as "soke" or "soke dai. Professor Bud Estes never referred to himself as "soke".

Statement 6. Whereas Merlin "Bud" Estes, and the American Judo and Jujitsu Federation have continued to uphold the highest ideals and standards of Danzan Ryu and the Kodenkan,

Response 6. This is a focused statement to those on the mainland and incomplete in regards to the rest of the history of the system. This statement implies to me, by omission, that all the other students of master Okazaki who became teachers of Danzan Ryu have failed to teach his system.

Statement 7. Whereas the American Judo and Jujitsu Federation has committed itself to the highest standards of honesty, integrity, and service on behalf of Danzan Ryu and Kodenkan,

Response 7. This certainly can be said of the other organizations teaching the Kodenkan System.

Statement 8. Whereas "Henry" Seishiro Okazaki failed to formally designate a "soke" (successor to the ryu),

Response 8. This statement, "soke (successor to the ryu)," defines "soke" as having control over the entire ryu. The ryu currently consists of at least seven different organizations. This proclaimed "soke", as defined in the proclamation document, will be "the successor" to the entire

Danzan system of jujitsu, not just the A.J.J.F. Soke can be translated as "the originator who has the essence of the house". The soke is the absolute headmaster of the entire ryu-system regardless of whether the ryu is represented by different organizations within the ryu-system. This "soke" as defined will supersede and be the head of all dan grade ranks and kyu class students of Danzan Ryu. Traditionally according to Japanese protocol of heirarchy, soke is above judan or tenth degree black belt grade and has total authority to administer or change the system, to promote or demote any person as he sees fit. Spelled out in no uncertain terms by the definition of this proclamation. The term "soke" in this "proclamation" means:

1. The "board of professors" of the American Judo and Jujitsu Federation, inc.

a. Shall have complete control over the administration of the teachings of the philosophy and techniques of the danzan system of jujitsu without asking anyone regardless of rank or title. I am specifically talking about all shihan, yudansha and mudansha whether individual or from any of the other organized danzan ryu organizations.

b. Can at his discretion disband all other organizations and individuals teaching or claiming to teach Danzan Ryu Jujitsu and restructure them to his own ideas. This is the awesome power that "soke" has and it would involve the "whole family" of Danzan Ryu jujitsu. Master Okazaki knew exactly what "soke" meant. Master Okazaki never referred to himself as "soke" in the "mokuroku" or the "kaidensho". In both of these documents he refers to himself as;

1. Danzan Ryu Soritsusha, sandalwood mountain system, "founder." See line 13 on Professor Carl Beaver's kaidensho scroll.

2. Kodenkan shu, ancient traditional house, master.see line 142 on professor Estes scroll. See line 14 on professor Carl Beavers kaidensho certificate.

3. Shinan, teacher. See line 143 on professor Estes mokuroku scroll.

4. Shihan, professor. See line 36 on professor Estes mokuroku scroll.

Master Okazaki created "kaidensho" (lit. A licensing certificate to teach the complete Danzan system). These certificates for his "shihan" (professors), gave them the authority to teach the complete system and promote people according to their skill and dedication to the system. Master Okazaki with great wisdom created this mode to transmit his system by teaching his students to become "shihan", exemplary teachers. I personally find no evidence of "soke" either in writing or in spirit from master Okazaki.

Statement 9: whereas, I Hachiro Okazaki, eldest son of "Henry Seishiro Okazaki, now stand in line as the official inheritor of "Danzan Ryu" and the Kodenkan.

Response 9. This is a proper line of succession according to Japanese protocol. If the master fails to designate, the master's title is generally awarded to the first born son. This would not make Mr. Hachiro Okazaki or anyone else "soke" as this title was never used by his father. Something cannot be passed which never existed in the first place. It would be like a senator willing his son the presidency.

Statement 10. "therefore, I Hachiro Okazaki, acting with a clear mind and conscience,"

Response 10. Does this mean that Mr. Hachiro Okazaki has thought about this and is aware of its extended ramifications?

1. Further divisions in the Okazaki family.
2. Further divisions between the American Judo and Jujitsu Federation and the other organizations teaching the Danzan system.

Statement 11. "do now proclaim for all to bear witness,"

Response 11. Mr. Hachiro Okazaki is directing this proclamation with its injunctions to everyone in the entire system represented by seven or more different organizations.

Statement 12. "that the "soke" of the Danzan Ryu and Kodenkan,

Response 12. This statement says to me that this "soke" has authority over all individuals and organizations that teach or claim to teach Danzan Ryu or Kodenkan Jujitsu.

Statement 13. "that the "soke" of the Danzan Ryu and Kodenkan, reside henceforth and forever in the person of the Board of Directors (Professors) of the American Judo and Jujitsu Federation, a non-profit California corporation, dedicated to the preservation and perpetuation of the Danzan Ryu and Kodenkan system of my father, "Henry" Seishiro Okazaki.

Response 13. This is where some real word magic occurs. This says to me that this "soke" is a non entity that resides in a group of people called the "active board of professors" of the American Judo and Jujitsu Federation. This says to me that the "soke" resides within the following people as a collective group and not as any single individual; professors Tom Ball, eighth dan, Pat Browne, sixth dan, Jane Carr, sixth dan., John Congistre, eighth dan, Don Cross, sixth dan, Gene Edwards, sixth dan, Lamar Fisher, ninth dan, Tom Jenkins, sixth dan, James Musselman, sixth dan, Rory Rebmann, seventh dan, Ken Regennitter, seventh dan.

ss Hachiro okazaki.. Date..June 12, 1991

in witness thereof, I have entered my seal

ss.....
my commission expires June 19, 1994

notary public

Statement 14. Signed: sr. Prof. Lamar Fisher. Stamped with two Japanese

stamps.

his name stamp - third "soke" of danzan ryu

Response 14. This says to me that the person of Professor Lamar Fisher has signed his name and stamped his seal on this certificate as the third "soke" of all Danzan Ryu and Kodenkan which includes all individuals and seven or more organizations teaching or claiming to teach the

Danzan system of jujitsu. Comment: there is no place on this document for any one person to sign his name declaring that he is the designated "soke" of the active board. The proclamation declares that the entire active board of professors are "soke" collectively.

My overall response to this proclamation is this:

Since the death of Master Henry Seishiro Okazaki in 1951 the different organizations of Kodenkan Danzan Ryu jujitsu have been teaching the system in their own geographical areas to the best of their abilities. Then in 1990, in commemoration of the birth of our founder, Master Henry Seishiro Okazaki, a great regathering of his spirit occurred in the idea of "ohana", family. Great teachers and students came together, many for the first time in many years, to pay their respects to their master. People coming together and sharing in the spirit of "kokua", the training that they had acquired through many years of study. That first "ohana" was such a success that it was decided to continue every other year or so to have another "ohana". Then in June 1991, the above "proclamation" was signed by Mr. Hachiro Okazaki. In the fall issue of the "Kiai Echo", the official newsletter of the American Judo and Jujitsu Federation, the "proclamation" was center folded. In an article by professor Lamar Fisher, he says, "we now have from Hachiro a proclamation saying that the American Judo and Jujitsu Federation will be the holder of his father's system, Danzan Ryu jujitsu. In that the AJJF is the leading group for the propagation of this system, Hachiro has given his blessing." Since the "proclamation" was issued it has created major dissension and bitterness throughout all of the organizations teaching Kodenkan jujitsu. In spite of this breach of spirit, "ohana 1992" was held with even greater success. The topic of "who would be soke" was stifled throughout the first two days, and privately discussed on the third day at a meeting of the professors of the different organizations. I recommended that the title of "soke", inheritor of the Kodenkan Danzan system, be dissolved for the following reasons.

1. That insufficient research was done on the drafting of the "proclamation", especially the word "soke". Professor Lamar Fisher had stated in the meeting that "his authority is solely within the realm of the American Judo and Jujitsu Federation and does not involve any other organizations teaching Kodenkan Jujitsu." Because of this limited authority, the title "soke" is inappropriate.
2. Professor Lamar Fisher is recognized by the board of directors, (professors) and its membership, as senior professor, ninth rank. He continues to wear red belt and be addressed as professor. A "soke" should wear a double wide white belt as he is above the tenth dan grading system. He has no graded rank. He should be addressed as "soke" as his only title.
3. It is against the basic teaching aptly expressed in the teaching scroll of Master Henry Seishiro Okazaki. This "proclamation" is counterproductive to the very spirit of "ohana" (family) and "kokua" (mutual co-operation and mutual welfare), and the growth of the entire Kodenkan System.
4. A re-examination of the title of "soke" should be made immediately by a special meeting of the A.J.J.F. Board of professors before this issue of "soke" is given press and media coverage to the martial arts world which interpret "soke" to mean "head of an entire system," and to the embarrassment of all the members of American Judo and Jujitsu Federation.

If a title is needed to designate a leader in A.J.J.F., a title such as "dai shihan", great teacher-senior professor, could be used. This title, unlike "soke", allows each organization to

have its own leader and be self governing yet recognizing and sharing with other organizations the spirit of "ohana". This whole issue which has caused so much concern appears to be a case of semantics, i.e. the incorrect choice of the Japanese word "soke".

In conclusion, because of the importance of this issue I have thought about it long hours and hope now that it can be resolved quickly so that the whole family of Kodenkan Danzan Ryu Jujitsu will continue in the spirit of "ohana".

Kokua

Tom Jenkins, Kodenkan Shihan

Part III

AJJF Proclaimed Inheritors of Danzan Ryu Fall 1991 Kiai Echo

Until recently, the Danzan Ryu community has not known that there are two different "Soke" Proclamations, the original and an unauthorized altered copy.

From the front cover of the Fall 1991 Kiai Echo: *"INSIDE: AJJF Proclaimed Inheritor of Danzan Ryu"*–

An article written by Professor Lamar Fisher appears on page 7.

I would like to thank everyone in the AJJF for the support you have given to make Dan Zan Ryu Jujitsu not only the oldest, but the leading jujitsu system in the United States.

I had the opportunity to go to Hawaii to see Hachiro Okazaki, Master Okazaki's son. It had been about twelve years since I had seen him, and it was a very rewarding meeting. We talked about old times and things that we shared with all the old students of Master Okazaki pre-1940.

When Bud Estes and Ray Law came back to the mainland in 1939 and started schools, it was clear that the system would continue and prosper. Thanks to all of you, it has.

I was there when Master Okazaki's letter was read giving Estes, Cahill, Law and Rickerts their professor ranks. I have great respect for all of our professors and would like to see more support to them.

We now have from Hachiro a proclamation saying that the AJJF will be the holder of his father's system, Dan Zan Ryu Jujitsu. In that the AJJF has been the leading group for the propagation of this system, Hachiro has given his blessings.

Hachiro, we will always love you and your dad for giving us this wonderful system.

The Kiai Echo Article:

The photo of Hachiro Okazaki and Sr. Professor Lamar Fisher holding the "Soke" Proclamation does not contain Professor Fisher's signature, his personal name chop and the 3rd Soke of DZR chop.

The copy of the "Soke" Proclamation inside this issue of the Kiai Echo does contain Professor Fisher's signature, his personal name chop and the 3rd Soke of DZR chop.

- Did the 1991 Board of Professors know there were two different Proclamations shown in the Kiai Echo?
- Why were there two different Proclamations?
- Why have both of these Proclamations been floating around the AJJF for the past 20 years?

Paragraph 4, Professor Fisher says, *"I was there when Master Okazaki's letter was read giving Estes, Cahill, Law and Rickerts their professor ranks."*

- This letter has not been shown to the AJJF membership and the DZR community. Why not?
- Would such a letter signed by Professor Okazaki be an important historical document for the AJJF and the DZR community?
- Why would such an important historical letter not be preserved?
- It is possible that this letter never existed?
- Was this "alleged" letter part of a larger story which included the altered "Soke" Proclamation and the fraudulent Estes kaidensho certificate?

This photo appeared on page 7 of the Fall 1991 Kiai Echo



You can clearly see at the bottom of the Proclamation that it had not been signed by Senior Professor Lamar Fisher and it did not contain his personal signature chop and the 3rd Soke of DZR chop.

This is a color copy of an altered Proclamation that appeared in the center of the Fall 1991 Kiai Echo



This copy came from the Medford Judo Academy. It was hanging on the dojo wall when I began training there in 2001.

Part IV

Prof. Fisher's Altered "Soke" Proclamation

Senior Professor Lamar Fisher had an active role in altering the "Soke" Proclamation. A lot of questions about Professor Fisher's involvement with altering this document may never be fully known. The fact still remains this important document was altered without any authorization and has become an embarrassment to the AJJF. How the rest of the Danzan Ryu community will judge the AJJF for altering this document remains to be seen. The events surrounding the altered "Soke" Proclamation have now become a chapter in the history of Danzan Ryu Jujitsu.

During the August 8, 2010 meeting with Professor Ball, I placed a copy of the "Soke" Proclamation on the table for everyone to see. I asked Professor Ball several questions about the "Soke" Proclamation.

McKean: Do you know what this certificate is?

Prof. Ball: Yes

McKean: As far as you're concerned is this an accurate and legitimate document?

Prof. Ball: It is.

McKean: What makes it a legitimate or illegitimate document?

Prof. Ball: It is notarized.

Comment: The document does not contain a seal or stamp showing the name of the notary jurisdiction or the registration number of the notary. The name of the notary is not readable.

McKean: Who was involved in making the "Soke" Proclamation"?

Prof. Ball: Gene Edwards.

Comment: If Professor Ball knew that Professor Gene Edwards was involved in making the "Soke" Proclamation then why didn't Professor Ball, or other members of the BOP, contact him before writing and publishing their inaccurate and misleading article in the Fall 2010 issue of the Kiai Echo?

McKean: For what purpose was the "Soke" Proclamation" made?

Prof. Ball: It says it on the face.

McKean: Why did Professor Fisher sign his name to the “Soke” Proclamation” and use his “chops” at the bottom?

Prof. Ball: I have no idea. It may have been the brain child of Professor Musselman.

Comment: In a phone interview, Professor James Musselman told me that he and others tried to talk Lamar Fisher out of signing the certificate.

McKean: Who had the chops (stamps) made for the “Soke” Proclamation”?

Prof. Ball: I don’t know.

McKean: Who has the chops now?

Prof. Ball: Betty (Fisher) had the signature stamp and I have the 3rd soke stamp.

Comment: Why did Professor Ball have Professor Fisher’s 3rd soke stamp?

The stamp should have been destroyed immediately after the death of Professor Fisher?

Professor Mussleman told me that he did not have the stamp made and he did not think Professor Fisher knew how or where to have one made.

McKean: Were those chops ever used on any other documents?

Prof. Ball: There were several copies made of a mokuroku that Lamar gave out.

McKean: The reduced sized ones?

Prof. Ball: Yes.

Comment: In late August of 2010 I was able to see a scaled down mokuroku that had been presented to an AJJF black belt. The mokuroku contained Lamar Fisher’s name stamp but not the 3rd soke stamp.

McKean: Do you know what the chops say?

Prof. Ball: One is Lamar’s name and one says 3rd soke of DZR.

Comment: Professor Ball knew that one stamp said “3rd soke of DZR”. He had knowledge that Professor Fisher had this stamp and had used it.

McKean: Did Professor Fisher consider himself as the 3rd soke of DZR?

Prof. Ball: NO! It was no big deal to him. He may not have known what the stamp said.

Comment: If it was “no big deal to him” they why did Professor Fisher have the soke stamp made and why did he use it on the “Soke” Proclamation?

Professor Ball knew what the stamp said but Professor Fisher may not have? Something is not right about that.

This was a big deal. It was a false representation of the title of “Soke”.

Professor Gene Edwards did not know that Professor Fisher had signed and stamped the “Soke” Proclamation until I pointed it out to him in late 2010.

McKean: Did you recognize him as the 3rd soke of DZR?

Prof. Ball: No.

McKean: Did the BOP recognize him as the 3rd soke of DZR?

Prof. Ball: No.

Comment: If Professor Ball and the BOP did not recognize Professor Fisher as the 3rd soke of DZR, why did they stand by and allow him to use the stamp to alter the “Soke” Proclamation?

Didn't the BOP have a duty and responsibility to the membership and the Danzan Ryu community to speak out and oppose the use of the 3rd soke stamp?

McKean: How many original “Soke” Proclamations were made?

Prof. Ball: 2

McKean: Do you know who has the original copies?

Prof. Ball: I do and Lamar (Prof. Fisher) had one.

Comment: Professor Gene Edwards said that he had 10 original copies made. They were special prints made on expensive paper.

Where are the other original documents? Who has them? How many were altered?

I handed a copy of a report written by Professor Jenkins in 1992 to Professor Ball and Professor Hodgkin.

McKean: Have you ever seen this document written by Professor Jenkins?

Prof. Ball: *He looked at it but did not give an immediate answer.*

McKean: Since Professor Jenkins report was addressed to the BOP do you know if it was ever read or presented at an official BOP meeting?

Prof. Carr: We did not take very good notes in those days. We have learned a lot since then and I believe we have gotten a lot better at it.

I placed a copy of the Fall 1991 Kiai Echo for everyone to see.

McKean: Have you seen the Fall 1991 issue of the Kiai Echo?

Prof. Ball: Picked up the copy and looked at it while I showed him the article about the Official Proclamation.

McKean: Have you seen this copy (in the Kiai Echo) of the "Official Proclamation"?

Prof. Ball: *Did not answer this question as he was looking and reading it.*

Comment: This copy did not contain the signature of Professor Fisher and his chops.

Several people close to the late Professor Imi Okazaki said that she protested the making of the "Soke" Proclamation stating that Hachiro did not have the authority or approval of the family to sign away the sokeship of the ryu?
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The idea of the original "Soke" Proclamation was a sincere attempt by Professor Gene Edwards to bring recognition to his sensei, Professor Bud Estes, and the AJJF for its

work and dedication to protecting, preserving and perpetuating the teachings of Professor Henry Seishiro Okazaki.

It is clear that Senior Professor Lamar Fisher produced and presented an unauthorized altered version of the "Soke" Proclamation. This alteration is an embarrassment to the members of the American Judo & Jujitsu Federation and the Danzan Ryu community. Several members of the Board of Professors were not on the Board in 1990 and may not have known about the altered "Soke" Proclamation, like they may not have known about the fraudulent Estes kaidensho certificate.

Now that these two forgeries have come to light, the entire Board of Professors must take responsible leadership and address both of these forgeries. Honesty, accuracy and transparency will be important in any decision they make concerning both of these forgeries. The importance of these two forged documents cannot simply be dismissed or explained away as "errors in judgment". Sound and responsible leadership is needed. Corrective actions, accountability and meaningful apologies must be made to the members of the AJJF and the Danzan Ryu community.

The "Soke" Proclamation story has been told, except the final chapter remains to be written.

2011