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At dawn on September 10, 1906, the steamship, S.S. China, docked at Honolulu. The ten-day trip from Yokohama had been uneventful. The Pacific Commercial Advertiser Daily, commenting on the China's arrival, noted that the ship carried eleven cabin passengers, the lowest in the history, 309 Japanese and 9 European immigrants in steerage.

One of the passengers in steerage was a young man named Seishiro Okazaki. Seishiro was sixteen when he arrived in Honolulu. He was the fourth son of Hanuemon Okazaki, whose family traced its roots back sixteen generations to a Samurai family. The family probably moved from Nagoya to Kakedacho some time after 1868, after the Meiji government had abolished Japan's feudal system and, in effect, the Samurai class.

When the family moved to Fukushima, they were wealthy, but Hanuemon Okazaki, Seishiro's father, was not fortunate. Several business ventures failed and by the time Seishiro was born, on January 28, 1890, the fortune that the family had once possessed was all but gone.

As soon as age permitted, Seishiro was apprenticed to a local businessman and by fifteen, plans were being made for him to leave Japan for Hawaii. This was a time of heavy Japanese migration. Hawaii was seen as the land of opportunity and the lure of new land and a new start may have been irresistible. If Okazaki's later life is any indication, it is obvious that he liked to travel, as he found new people and new places stimulating. For whatever reasons, in late August of 1906, he made his way south to the port city of Yokohama, bought a ticket on the S.S. China and on the morning of September 1, watched the Japanese coast disappear as the China steamed towards Hawaii. He would not see Japan again for eighteen years.

Okazaki arrived in the Hawaiian Islands at Honolulu. Many of the Japanese immigrants found work in the cane fields and Okazaki was no exception. He went to work for the Ewa plantation. He was not a particularly robust man. Tallish and slim, and with what was probably asthma, Okazaki did not find the hard and dusty work of the plantation appealing or healthy. He left the Ewa plantation and took a job, first with a local store, called Yoshimura's and then with Hoffschlaeger's, a local wholesale company, before he left and made his way to Maui. On Maui, Okazaki went to work for the Paia plantation, where he married.

By 1909, Okazaki had made his way to Hilo. He had spent no more than two years on Oahu and Maui. He stayed on the big island for seventeen years and it was on Hawaii that he began his martial arts training.

When Okazaki arrived in Hilo, he was not well. He had a cough and was run down. He was a doctor who diagnosed him as having a pre-tubercular condition. The doctor may have told him to take it easy and conserve his strength. Ignoring his doctor's caution, Okazaki went in search of a cure. He found it in an odd place, the Hilo Shinyu-Kai, a Jujitsu dojo, run by a martial arts master, named Kichimatsu Tanaka. Jujitsu was probably the last thing Okazaki's doctor would have ordered. The strenuous workouts, the falls, the constant battering would hardly have been a suggested cure for tuberculosis. However, within a year, the pretubercular condition had disappeared and the tall skinny kid, according to Okazaki's own words, had developed a "body of iron". This interest in the martial arts that began in Hilo in 1909 became an all-consuming passion.

The years in Hilo were busy ones. Jujitsu workouts with Tanaka-sensei were daily. When he wasn't at Shinyu-Kai, he was working. He tried a number of different jobs but Jui-Jitsu was his life. As he learned Yoshin-ryu from Tanaka-sensei he began to study other forms as well. He studied Hawaiian Lua, Okinawan karate, Philippine knife play and, from Master Wo Chong, Kung Fu. However, his main proficiency was in Yoshin-ryu, the style taught by Tanaka-sensei.

The recovery of his health and his expertise in Yoshin-ryu made Okazaki a bit cocky. In the early twenties, he began going around the island, fighting exhibition bouts where and when he could find takers. His greatest moments came in May of 1922. In April of that year, a friend of Okazaki's, a martial artist named "Speed" Takahashi challenged a boxer, named Carl "Kayo" Morris to a bout. It was to be a confrontation between a boxer and a Jujitsu expert. Takahashi was fast and extremely proficient, but he wore glasses and couldn't see well without them. Morris took advantage of his handicap and knocked Takahashi out in the first round.

Okazaki immediately challenged Morris to a bout. For the next month and a half, he trained. He watched other boxers to try to find weaknesses. A friend who worked at the Chevrolet dealership suggested that he should try to stay very low, out of the reach of Morris' punches. He used this advice. On May 19, 1922 the two men met. The fight was scheduled for six, three-minute rounds. It lasted only two. In the first round, Okazaki stalked his man, staying down in a low crouch. Theory is always less hazardous than practice. Okazaki misjudged both Morris' reach and power and had his nose broken halfway through the first round.

In the next round, Okazaki watched for an opening. Morris, who had been jabbing, keeping Okazaki away, left his arm out a bit too long. Okazaki moved, driving under the boxer's arm and throwing the man. The throw and the fall injured Morris' arm and he was unable to continue. Okazaki's fame was immediate and the newspapers carried the story all the way back to Japan.

The Hilo Daily Tribune, while not lavish with its praise, was nonetheless enthusiastic. The story made the front page of the Saturday morning edition with the headlines, "Morris Has No Chance Against Jujitsu Expert":

"Five minutes after the start of the mixed bout and during which time Okazaki threw Morris and himself over the ropes into the audience upon two occasions. (sic) Okazaki threw his opponent to the mat and with an arm lock which wrenched the muscles of Morris' right arm and forced him to (figuratively speaking) throw up the sponge.

At first sight, it looked as if Morris' arm was broken, but after an examination by Dr. S. R. Brown, who was present in the audience, it was found that the muscles were merely badly wrenched. "

After the bout, Okazaki is supposed to have visited Morris in the hospital and massaged the boxer's arm, and the two are even said to have become friends. Whatever the epitaph to the bout, the win must have certainly bolstered Okazaki's already healthy ego.

In 1924, Okazaki returned to Japan and made a six-month whirlwind tour of as many dojos as he could visit. He evidently stopped at the Kodokan, tested there for rank, and was awarded his Sandan.

In 1926, Okazaki was described as a "Jujitsu Instructor" in the Hilo directory. It was the first time that he had listed his passion as his profession. In this same year, Okazaki moved from Hilo to Maui. In 1927, in

the Maui directory, he was listed as “Professor Henry S. Okazaki, Restoration Massage.” It is the first time that the name “Henry” appears and the first time Restoration Massage appears as his business. In actual fact, he had been studying massage along with his training in Yoshin-ryu. The move to Maui was the beginning of his life’s work in both these areas.

Okazaki spent four years in Maui. During that time he and his brother, Genkitchi, who had come to Hawaii in 1917, built a massage and Jujitsu complex at Paukukalo, just north of Kahului, right on the ocean. It was an impressive complex with a large massage area, hot tubs, and a dojo. For the next four years, Okazaki began training both Japanese and Caucasians in what he called Dan Zan Ryu.

Dan Zan Ryu was the name Okazaki gave to the Jujitsu system that he developed himself. It was a hybrid system, taking what he thought was the best from Yoshin-ryu, Hawaiian Lua, Okinawan karate and other forms of Japanese and Chinese martial arts. There were few forms of fighting with which he was not familiar and he used this extensive knowledge to good advantage in the development of Dan Zan Ryu. Originally the system consisted of five and possibly six lists: Yawara, Nage No Kata, Shime No Kata, Oku No Kata, Shinin No Maki, and possibly Shinyo. Other lists and techniques would be added later.

At the same time he was developing Dan Zan Ryu, Okazaki also began to develop his own method of massage. He had studied massage with Tanaka-sensei and had picked up European techniques which he must have seen used on local boxers and wrestlers. The Okazaki method of Restorative Massage, like Dan Zan Ryu, was a hybrid. It was a system that made use of the forearm, the point of the elbow and the feet, as well as the hands. Okazaki is best remembered as a martial artist but during his lifetime he was best known as a highly skilled physical therapist.

The Maui complex was a busy place. During the day, the brothers would massage patients; at night they would either teach at the dojo or go around to the local dojos in the area and teach. The Maui complex and the four years that Okazaki spent there were the beginnings of Dan Zan Ryu and the Okazaki method of Restorative Massage.

Okazaki left Maui in 1929/1930 and, once in Oahu, rented a house on South Hotel Street. The house which was called “Nikko,” was of Japanese design. Okazaki bought the house in the 30’s and Nikko became the center for Dan Zan Ryu for the next twenty-one years. However, Okazaki’s first order of business was not Jujitsu. Jujitsu had never provided him with much of an income. He had made his money from his ability with massage. On Oahu, he would establish a physical therapy business first, Jujitsu would come later.

By the summer of 1931 his massage business was established but all he lacked was a dojo, a place where he could begin work out and train students. Directly behind the office was a concrete slab about twenty by forty feet. Hachiro, Okazaki’s oldest son, recalls just how Dan Zan Ryu got started in Oahu:

” I was watering the Japanese garden one day in my shorts. I was a skinny, puny kid. He was watching me and he says, “Take a fall.” And I looked at the grass I was standing on and said, “Gee, there’s not enough room.” And he said, “No, on the concrete.” I looked at him and said, “There’s no Tatami!” He blew his top and said, “Out on the street are you gonna tell a guy, Wait till I get a tatami?” So I took a sutemi because I was an obedient son and I wanted to impress him. I could feel all my bones go crunch, crunch on the concrete. “

That concrete slab was the mat where Okazaki's student practiced for the first few years. Needless to say, the classes weren't very large. The initial group consisted of Hachiro, a Japanese boy named Oscar Kowashima and a Caucasian boy named Benjamin Marks. The first year never saw more than eight or nine boys on the "mat" at once. Interestingly, no one was hurt on the concrete and, as Hachiro remembers it, falling on the concrete wasn't half bad... after you got used to it. Hachiro recalls:

" Finally, about a couple of years later he was able to buy a tatami and that was when the class sizes increased. But on the concrete it was a lot of fun, nobody got hurt. If it rained it didn't matter and if you threw a guy, he'd just skid on the concrete. It was a lot of fun. After he bought the mats, we got dislocated necks and pulls and all that. As long as we were on concrete, we were fine. "

Literally thousands of students studied under Seishiro Okazaki. He taught Caucasians as well as Japanese. In fact, he was willing to teach anyone who wanted to learn. Jujitsu had always been the domain of the Japanese and Okazaki's generosity in sharing Jujitsu with others was not well received by the more conservative Japanese community. But he persevered, even teaching during the war years when Japanese were not well thought of, nor well tolerated. His work schedule was the schedule of two men. He'd start his work day around 7 AM and massage clients until 10 PM, with breaks for Jujitsu practice. After he finished the massages or the Jujitsu class, he would go out and massage invalids, people who could not come to him. By 2 AM he was home again where he would drag his son out of bed. Half-awake, Hachiro would massage his father's hands and feet so he could sleep.

The Nikko Restoration Sanitarium and the Dan-Zan-Ryu dojo would become landmarks in Hawaiian history. When Franklin D. Roosevelt came to the Islands in the 30's, Okazaki was called in to massage him. When John Burn's (future governor) wife developed polio in 1935, it was Okazaki who took her on as a patient. Okazaki worked with Mrs. Burns for several years and, in 1936, when she decided to have a third child, against all the best advice of the local obstetricians, it was Okazaki who helped her through her pregnancy, constantly massaging her and providing encouragement.

Okazaki was eminently skilled as both a Jujitsu master and a physical therapist. He developed a system which has grown to be one of the major systems of Jujitsu in North America. Yet, his reputation as a physical therapist in the islands was even greater than his reputation as a martial artist. Okazaki was famous for taking patients who were considered beyond help by the medical profession. He was no miracle worker but a hard worker who believed in his ability to help.

Vigorous massage, steam baths, hot foul-smelling poultices, exercise and a tremendous confidence in his skill and the recuperative powers of the human body were the tenets of Okazaki's style of physical therapy.

His greatest gift was his willingness to help others. People who knew him all point to his generosity and to the time and effort he gave to those who needed it as the mark of the man. Okazaki died in 1951, but his work has continued. His method of massage is carried on by his son, Hachiro, as well as hundreds of other men and women who learned physical therapy through him. Dan Zan Ryu Jujitsu which, under Okazaki's guidance, grew to be a major system in the Islands has, if anything, a larger following today than it did when Okazaki was alive.