

流 vs. 館

The Difference Between Danzan-Ryū and Kodenkan

by Prof. George Arrington

The terms **Danzan-Ryū** and **Kodenkan** are often use interchangeably for the Jujutsu system developed by Henry Seishiro Okazaki. Which is correct? Does it matter?

In order to comprehend this, the reader must understand the difference between the meanings of Ryū 流 and Kan 館.

"Danzan-Ryū" 檀山流 literally means "sandlewood mountain system". The "Danzan" part of this term is used by Japanese persons to describe the Hawaiian Islands because of the aromatic sandlewood trees that grow on the Hawaiian slopes. The term in Chinese is "Tan Shan" and was used by Wo Chung, who was one of Okazaki's instructors. The Japanese word, "Ryū" literally means "stream" but can also mean a school of thought. Many Japanese martial arts schools use this term. Some notable examples are: Daito-Ryū, Tenshin Shinyo-Ryū and Kito-Ryū. It is a fair assumption that the Japanese Okazaki used the name Danzan-Ryū to name his Ryūha 流派, "system".

"Kodenkan" 古傳館 literally means "ancient tradition school". The term "Kan" here refers to a physical building. When he opened his school in Honolulu, Okazaki called his gymnasium, the Kodenkan and placed a sign outside containing these characters. This was consistent with other martial art schools like Kano's Jūdō (Kōdōkan 講道館) and Funakoshi's Karate (Shōtōkan 松濤館). In all of these cases, the names refer to the physical dojo and technically, the style would be called, for example, Shōtōkan-Ryū.

To be absolutely pedantic, one should use Danzan-Ryū as the system name (e.g. Danzan-Ryū Jujutsu) and Kodenkan as the physical dojo building name.