

## Aloha

As with all Hawai'ian words, there is more than one meaning to the word "Aloha." Generally used as hello and goodbye, "Aloha" denotes goodwill and positive attitude regarding a relationship. In a more definitive sense, the word "Alo" means "front or face" and "Ha" is breath. When Hawai'ians would greet they would hold shoulders, rub noses and breath on each other. On a more esoteric note, "Ha" is life itself and "Alo" is to share or "be with." Therefore, Aloha is to share life itself.

To "share life itself" is to accept the notion that we are all of one, unified source. We have the experience of individuality but recognize that when we come together without judgment, and with unconditional acceptance, we feel closer to that source. Therefore our relationships govern our connection to ourselves as both human and divine.

On the mat, the study and practice of Danzan is two fold; we work to improve ourselves thru balance, flexibility, movement etc as well as to improve our ability to integrate with a partner (albeit an attacker). When working with a partner, your personal judgments of that person will impact your mindset and therefore for your actions. If you are fearful you will be unbalanced. If you're irritated you will be unbalanced. If you have disdain... etc. We must approach the Uke with evenness and respect in order to keep ourselves from attaching to an outcome and thus losing our spontaneity.

In life, it is only our self-identity that judges others. It's "who we think we are" that judges "who they think they are." Aloha reminds us that we are all equal and equally divine. We have all been born perfect only to be raised by our life's experience to fear each other and therefore judge. Aloha frees us to just be and to accept others for who they really are. At their core, their source they are more than "like" us... They "are" us.

Work to approach your mat Uke with evenness and acceptance. Do not judge their size or strength as either advantage or disadvantage. Do not judge their appearance as threatening or pitiful. In doing so you will maintain your Ju and flow with spontaneous creativity.

Work to approach your life's Uke with the same evenness and acceptance. Forgive their imperfections as well as your own and realize your profound connection to all life. Share yourself without fear and you will indeed...

Live Aloha.