

Kokua: The Tao of Danzan Ryu?

Here's a bold statement: The path to "Oneness" is paved with Kokua. Here's another: "To understand Kokua is to realize Ju.

Good attention grabbers but what exactly is "Kokua?"

Andrews Hawaiian Dictionary defines Kokua as " Assistance, help, charity or cooperation." If one were to reside in Hawaii for any period of time you would most certainly hear the word used to denote all those ideas and, very often, another: "Compliance." Many times you will hear "Mahalo for your Kokua" when you are asked to wait in line. Or when you are asked to be patient. Essentially, it means to "go along" with it. Do not oppose what is being requested. Let's think about that...

"Compliance"-- To go along with, to be in non-opposition towards... kind of sounds familiar. As it should. It is the fundamental precept of JU. I.E "Ju" Jitsu..."Ju"- Do or Path of Ju. It's the underlying concept of all that is Yawara. To go around conflict; to oppose nothing; to force nothing. In fact, one might even make the assertion that to cultivate Ju on the mat is really an attempt to better understand Kokua in life? Bit of a stretch? Maybe.

Consider our healing art: Seifukujitsu. Does the very act of assisting another to heal require compassion? I don't think many would argue that. The answer is most definitely yes. There would also be little argument that to express compassion for another's suffering is in itself an act of Kokua. Could there be a connection here between training in Seifukujitsu and learning to cultivate Kokua in life? Well-- Stretching can be therapeutic...Let's get more literal.

When Master Okazaki chose the name "Kodenkan" for his school in Honolulu, he likely did so for a reason. It is well accepted that one interpretation of the three kanji that make up the name; Ko Den Kan, is "The school where the senior transmits to the junior." And on behalf of those juniors I would like to say "Mahalo for your Kokua." Professor Okazaki also wrote in his Mokuroku: "Possess in yourself modesty, humility, courtesy and respect. Believe in your friends and have peace, harmony and reconciliation towards your spouse, friends and brethren, with good doings towards your parents. Having these qualities in your mind, reach out to everybody with benevolence." Benevolence: Defined by Webster as " a disposition to do good." I think Kokua fits here like a glove.

So, is kokua, in all its interpretations, really "The Tao of Danzan Ryu?" Is it the path that leads to understanding "the secret mysteries of our house?"

Let's review:

- Andrews Hawaiian Dictionary defines Kokua as; help; assistance; Co-operation, what's given in charity.
- Everyday usage of the term often refers to "acceptance or compliance" towards a rule or situation.
- Compliance most certainly can be used to describe the philosophy of JU.
- Seifukujitsu teaches that we must cultivate compassion and selflessness to assist others in healing.
- Master Okazaki refers to "Kindness; courtesy; and charity" as the "source of mutual existence and prosperity." and further writes "only then will you personally benefit by acquiring and mastering the secret art of the perfection of selflessness."

Could The Tao of Danzan Ryu really be as simple as that? I guess we'll find out.

Kokua.....Hmmm