



Danzan Ryu literally means,  
“Sandalwood Mountain Style.”  
Sandalwood Mountain refers to Hawaii.  
Danzan Ryu is formed of three characters:  
檀山流



檀 Dan is derived from two basic characters. The one on the left is wood or tree. The one on the right forms the patterns of a field. The derivation becomes, “sandalwood,” “spindle” or “cedar” tree. Sandalwood (*Santalum ellipticum*) trees were a popular export from Hawaii and were highly valued by the Chinese community. Although in limited amount, there are still sandalwood trees on the islands. Heavy exploitation in the late 18th century to the mid-19th century of the precious resource resulted in the destruction of many of the original sandalwood forestry. Today, Hawaiian sandalwood is state regulated and preserved.

山 Zan. This is the character for mountain. It is a basic pictograph profile image of a mountain. In Japanese, it is pronounced, “ya-ma” or “san”. The Hawaiian Islands are comprised of numerous volcanic mountain chains and each island appears mountainous.

流 Ryu. This character is made up of a nose (older kanji had a complete face), a river, a lid, and phonetic marker. This refers to being distinguished or different from others. The reference to the face is often interpreted as each individual is unique and the river is something natural. Together it may mean that our distinct nature is something unique and natural and not static. It can also mean flow or current, depending on context. It is pronounced, “ree-yuu” in Japanese. Generally, it refers to a school of thought or manner in which something is done. In the context of martial arts, it means “style.”

檀山 Danzan (or Tian Zhan) was the name the Chinese community gave to Hawaii. Notably, Honolulu has similar characters. It was referred to as, 檀香山 “Tian Kao Zhan”. The 香 Kao is the character for fragrance. Sandalwood trees were known for their aromatic, herbal, and medicinal properties. One can imagine the smell of the exported sandalwood as it was being shipped through the island’s busiest city and major port of call.

Tradition holds Master Okazaki gave his jujutsu the name, “Hawaii” but in the Chinese distinction in honor of his Chinese martial art instructor, Sifu Wo Chong who broke tradition by teaching a Chinese Art to a non-Chinese. During the turn of the twentieth century, this was highly progressive and unprecedented. Learning this lesson, Okazaki did the same by teaching his jujutsu to anyone regardless of gender, creed, or race. Jujutsu is comprised of two characters: 柔術

柔 Ju is comprised of a wood or tree, and halberd or arms. The tree represents Softness (ed: or pliability). As it is being pressed upon, it gives way and yields, not unlike the willow tree that bows when there is snow upon its branches. The willow yields and gives way to the weight bending and allows the snow to fall on its own instead of stubbornly standing its ground and breaking.

術 Jutsu can mean trick, magic, art, or technique. It comes from combining the character for growing, or a tree/wood and flowing or current. Skill is something nurtured and developed. In this pictograph skill is represented by growth and the result of that growth is constant flow in whatever the art it represents. Skill is something that flows naturally and is not stagnant.

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