

The Teaching of Okugi (updated Dec. 29, 2009)

Much has been made about the teaching of “Okugi” in recent years. A certain individual went so far as to Copyright the term!

Imagine copyrighting a term that does not belong to them! That reminds me of Scott McNealy's quote that Microsoft having copyrighted and trademarked “NT” would soon copyright and trademark the rest of the alphabet. What a hoot!

When we look at the people in the graduation photo of the 1948 “okugi” we see literally two score (40) of individuals with dignitaries and co-instructor(s) seated! Each was equally taught and equally empowered to teach what was taught.

But, lo and behold, all the facts would be dismissed. Professor Anderson (yes, he was promoted to Professor by Master Okazaki) is seated along with other dignitaries. Yet there are those who would infer he was a graduate!

He was a teacher! He was not a graduate. According to his son and another student, he had one of his diplomas signed by the Emperor Hiro Hito. He was a leader, a Judo Master and a Godan recipient!

These graduates were his students. Because one of them chose later to declare himself to be the sole benefactor does not make it so. We do not hear any applause or honor given to this great Judo leader, teacher and master.

No. They would bury him with a fast shovel. But, I am here to declare otherwise.

For one thing, that weekend class was much larger than anything Master Okazaki had ever held for one of his special classes. According to Anderson's son, Marion Anderson (and, as I was told decades previously, a few others) went to Master Okazaki and requested he impart his teachings while his health was still good. He agreed.

But this class was topical. It had too many students to be an actual “Okugi” class. Why? Because the teaching is from “mouth to ear”. The Master must look each in the eye and see if the teaching is taking hold. If not, the class may end in short order or a student may be dismissed before the class ends. The dismissal is not an insult. It just means the student is not ready at that time or on that day.

None of this happened because the class was not Master Okazaki's choosing. It was a last grasp at preserving and perpetuating his Kodenkan. And no sooner was it over than his “students” began to fail him.

Ego before achievement! How quickly after Master Okazaki's death did the students leave the Kodenkan? The student enrollment shrunk with the passing of each day. Before long, there were not enough students to keep the place clean. And these “great leaders” would declare themselves the “inheritors”! “Inheritors!” Can you imagine!

Boasting, womanizing and indolence and they declared they were the leaders!

Shameful!

Okugi cannot be taught to scores in a weekend. It cannot be taught in a weekend. It must first be learned and after the student learns, he/she is then told what they have learned. This is the imparting of the “Okugi”.

Shinjin no Maki is a list of Atemi. That is all it is. It can be found by different names in other systems. Some nonsense techniques exist as they are likely Hawaiian Lua Arts and not Japanese Jujutsu. These are the Arts that a 400 lb man can do against a 130 lb man.

So the list is not important. It is important only to those who do not understand and likely will never understand.

The Atemi is not the end of the system. It is not the final vehicle. It is a list of things that should mostly be known.

The teaching is on the Spirit of the Practice. By incorporating the Kiai taught early on and taking the learning of this list and incorporating this new knowledge into one's Judo practice, one could become the complete Judo person.

Professor Estes said that one of the secrets he seldom spoke of was that Master Okazaki taught his Shinjin Arts while teaching massage; sometimes on students, other times on patients. Master Okazaki would say, "Kyoshi, come here. See, if we press here ... see how he responds. This is a very sore point. But, see if press here. This helps him to relax."

The effects of the Atemi were often taught during the course of massage while the Atemi practice was in incorporating proper Kiai into the technique. Not all strikes have to be hard. Not all strikes will be certain. Each body type is different and the Atemi have different results. By touching and massaging, one became aware of the body types and how pressure points effected some and not others.

This is where the instruction took place. In the Dojo and in the massage practice. The students were few. The teaching was Master to student, mouth to ear.

Don't be deceived. Now you know.