



Okinawan Goju Ryu Karate-Do Kenkyu Kai

NYU-SURETA

Spring ~2009

Gasshuku Summary

Hombu Dojo hosted another great Gasshuku this past April 3rd – 5th. We had a large contingency of brown and black belts in attendance this year, which is always fun.

Sensei Tracie from Hombu, Sensei Bryan from Hombu, Sensei Allan from Hombu, Sensei David from Hombu, Sensei Bret from Hombu, Sensei Ken from Hombu, Sensei Charlie from Hombu, Sensei Kristin from Washington, Sempai Jason from Chicago, O'Hara Sensei, Wilson Sensei, and special guests instructor Shihan Mel Pralgo from Thousand Oaks all taught at this year's Gasshuku. I hope I didn't forget anyone, if I did miss someone, my apologies.

We have never had so many different topics or instructors teach at Gasshuku. What was wonderful about it was that more of our yudansha got exposure to our members and there were many more topics covered than is usual. There are pros and cons to having so many instructors and topics. The pros include the Gasshuku moves very quickly, participants are exposed to more instructors and topics, there is more variety, and more to think about following Gasshuku. The only real negative we heard regarding this year's event was that the

sessions were too short and as such hard for some participants to grasp the training before it ended.

We received feedback from several participants indicating they would like to see longer sessions and fewer topics. Also, members in California like to train with Wilson Sensei as they do not see him often and members from out of state desire to train more with O'Hara Sensei. Next year, Sensei said he is going to take all of the out of state members for a two hour session, while I teach the members from California for a two hour session. This will allow us to teach longer and more in-depth courses.

Additional feedback also included that we may consider another location as we have had a couple of years with serious ant problems and this year the grass was so dry that there were a lot of stickers. The location was moved to Hart Park due to the rules and costs associated to renting a City park.



Virtuous Conduct

Gasshuku Summary Continued:

Future Gasshuku may also not include children so the focus can be teaching the teachers who teach the children. We will consider options and brainstorm before next year. We are always trying to keep Gasshuku fees low and the curriculum exciting. In the future, Hombu may host a Juniors only Gasshuku for the kids. Thanks for the feedback it is appreciated!

There isn't space to cover everything that was taught at this year's event, but some of the different topics covered included grappling, very advanced kakie, kumite partner drills teaching angles and combinations, Buchin kata, body conditioning, O'Hara Sensei's new Kihon Ido series, Seiyunchin kata, Shisochin kata, Jiyu kumite, and kicking drills with focus shields.

By the end of Saturday everyone was pretty tired and hopefully had a lot to take back and practice. It is important to practice what was learned at Gasshuku as soon as possible in order to retain it.

The Sayanora Dinner at the Great Castle was awesome as always. This is time well spent enjoying great food, making new friends, renewing old friendships, comparing bruises, and telling war stories.

O'Hara Sensei wants to thank everyone who attended and all the members of Hombu dojo who helped make the Gasshuku a success. Lunch on Saturday at Hart Park was once again amazing and very much appreciated.

***If you cannot find the truth where you are,
where do you think you will find it?***

Dogen

Grading



On Sunday, the above candidates all participated in and successfully passed their promotional examinations. Congratulations and great job! Something noticeable at this year's event was that everyone testing seemed to be in very good condition. Even though there were more breaks than may be normal due to the number of participants, everyone always gave 100% when performing and remained strong for more than five hours.

Gasshuku and Grading Overview

The only way for us to improve is to review how we perform as individuals and as a group and then focus on areas where improvement can be made. Some things that we noticed during this year's event that we would like each dojo to work on, includes:

- Lower stances
- Don't hold back, put kime and power into each technique; always train like you would fight.
- Sanchin – Sink and try to isolate and tighten each individual muscle to obtain whole body tension and root.

A Note to all OGRKK Students

O'Hara Sensei, OGRKK Kancho

Since I have been involved in the martial arts, there have always been questions like: Which are it best? Which sensei is best? How would a karate-ka fare against a boxer, a wrestler, or a judo-ka? And the list goes on. These are innocent queries and do offer food for thought, however, other question regarding teaching methods, teacher's personalities, comparing teachers and even student can lead to dissension, confusion and even animosity in what should be a cohesive group whose individual aspirations should not be compromised. Furthermore, such behavior, though not maliciously intended, will migrate through an organization with deleterious effects.

These transgressions are not often apparent and, fortunately, not frequent. This offering is simply another way to forestall an eventuality. Following are a few guidelines to direct our path:

- 1) It is not appropriate to refer to another's prowess in a negative way. Remember, Karate is for everyone and each progresses at his own rate and to his own level of expertise.
- 2) Rank, being a relative thing, is awarded under many criteria among which are age, physical impediments, former training in Goju and former training in other systems.
- 3) For those with no special needs, the standards of training time, time in grade and over all skills are used to determine whether a student passes or fails to advance.

Keep in mind that failure to advance is not abject failure; nobody who trains fails, there are only those who advance at different rates. There is no shame in not advancing – there is only shame in not continuing to train. Karate, if done in its classical way, is a commitment not to be taken lightly and it should be understood that it is the “Do”, the way of Karate that has meaning; the rank is merely a means by which the Sensei can develop a curriculum to suit the members of a given class. We should each remember these points.

- 4) Often we say things that are thoughtless and inappropriate; this is human nature. However, the OGRKK family is a tight and serious one; we care for each other and we desire success for each member. A misplaced comment could easily insult or physically impact a fellow Doshi. Please think before you speak, especially if it is a third person comment referencing a person within the group present.
- 5) The most important element in traditional karate is kata. Kata should not change in traditional style, period. However, just as we are not “cookie cutter” sensei, our kata and teaching methods may differ. This being the case, it must be emphasized that changes in the appearance of the kata can't change the meaning. The direction, angles, method of delivery of techniques, stances, and other aspects of the kata should not be changed, and each move must effectively show the bunkai possibility (ies).

All of this being said, through research in an effort to perform any kata more like it was

originally, certain changes or variances may be made, but only by the organizational chief, and only after thorough study and consultation with the executive board.

Some Shibu Dojo may, through normal processes, do kata differently from Hombu or one another. This is usually because the Shibu Chief or his representative does not train with the organizational Chief Instructor frequently, and may have altered the kata to better accommodate his abilities or, perhaps, he is from another Goju system and has joined us to convert to our particular style. There are certainly other reasons, but the above are most common.

We are all human and therefore fallible, yet we must do our best to hold tightly to the traditional kata. Each dojo should rely on its instructional staff to periodically review the kata to clarify any difference that may be found. Should a consensus not be reached, the Dojo Chief should contact the organizational Chief Instructor. This procedure should rectify most kata disparities.

As attentive as we are to detail in our effort to be true to the intentions of the founder of our style, we must realize that because of our imperfect nature, we will err both as students and teachers. We must all accept our own shortcomings as well as those of others. Therefore, we must accept the efforts of our sempai to teach us, different though they may be. A simple solution to the problem of the “different teacher, different kata” is simply graciously accept the technical differences being taught and, later ask your own sensei how he wants it done. This will assure that you have noticed differences and that your sensei addresses

them and, if necessary makes the changes needed or simply informs as you of the reason this difference doesn't matter.

Saifa Kata

By Steve Wilson

Breaking down some of the details of an individual kata, let's look at some standardization of techniques within kata. We will do one kata each Newsletter in an effort to help standardize member dojo, although there will always be slight variations. Details provided from reviewing Higaonna Sensei's Saifa tape.

These techniques may vary slightly by dojo, but these details are how Higaonna Sensei performs the kata and how you would perform it if you were to train with him or at the Jundokan in Okinawa.

- Backfist – The arm of the Uraken uchi travels inside of the blocking arm and whips outward to the target area. The arm does not travel behind your head, nor should the strike have an exaggerated downward arch. The arm has a slight downward arch to it, but the fist and arm does not travel downward when it reaches the target. The arm should whip and push outward and kime upon reaching the target.
- The Hiza geri (knee strike) before the Mae Geri should be pronounced and obvious. You do not simply raise the leg. Drag your foot and then pop the knee up into the groin.
- The toes are down when executing the Hiza Geri and Josokute for Mae Geri. Just relax your foot and execute the kick with great speed and retraction. Keep

your knee raised high for Hiza geri and the Mae geri.

- When kicking, your head should be looking to the side on both kicks (different sides of course). This is a very common mistake seen often. Watch Higaonna Sensei's tape, the head is turned to the side when executing the kicks. The head turns forward again following the second kick.
- The Tettsui uchi (hammer fist) always has the hand that is on the side of the forward leg, closed. The other hand which is on the side of the rear leg is open. Simply drop your arms in a downward arc and strike the fist into the open palm. Relax your shoulders to accomplish this properly. The strike "is not" over your knee. It is just in the center of the body; or phrased more correctly, it is where your hands meet naturally, but it is not over the knee. Striking directly over the knee is the Japanese Goju Ryu version.
- When executing the Jodan Tettsui uchi (high hammer fist strike) the retracted hand should be a closed fist, not an open hand. This is a "major" kiai and focus point of the kata.
- When executing the Chudan Ura zuki following the hammer fist, be sure to fully retract your other hand (which is open). Many people have their retracted hand to low on this technique. Pull it all of the way back.
- The punch following the last Ura zuki is a Jodan Gyaku zuki. A lot of people accidentally punch Chudan level.

- Whip the Haito uchi (ridgehand strike) fast and sharp. At completion your top and bottom hand should be one vertical fist distance apart.

Uechi Deshi – Sensei Todd Fessenden

Uchi deshi literally means "Inside Student". I spent about two years as uchi deshi to Nobuo Iseri Shihan (1936-2001) at the Moving Centre Aikido Dojo in Ventura California. Iseri Sensei (6th Dan) was a pioneer of Aikido in the U.S., one of the first American Shihan under T.K. Chiba Shihan, who himself served as uchi deshi to Morihei Ueshiba, Founder of Aikido.

Technically I was actually a soto (outside) deshi as I had a home and did not sleep at the dojo, the primary difference there being I smelled my own liniment at night versus mine and any other uchi deshi. After training for about a year and a half and attaining a level of fourth kyu (our schools ranked downward from 6th kyu to 1st kyu prior to Shodan) I was identified by the existing uchi deshi as a potential candidate. In a quasi-endurance test my sempai would invite me to train after class and push me. This usually involved after-class training of about an hour and a half, which was beyond the roughly 3 hours we had already spent on the mat in regular classes. Once my mettle was sufficiently tested, my sempai inquired as to my interest in becoming Iseri Sensei's next uchi deshi. This transition was primarily due to the fact that my sempai had already spent a couple of years as uchi deshi himself. I volunteered and was interviewed briefly by Sensei and thus began a two year disciple-ship. An uchi deshi really only needs to know two phrases for a couple of years; "Hai Sensei" and "Domo Arigato Gozaimashita". In English these translate roughly to "Yes Sir" and "Thank You Very Much". My time as uchi deshi involved:

- Training Monday through Friday at the dojo:
 - Morning Class: 1 ½ hours plus another hour receiving private instruction
 - Noon Class two days per week one hour plus 1-2 hours private instruction
 - Evening classes Mon-Friday 3 hours
 - Train with sempai and kohei after class every evening 1-2 hours
 - Attend one hour Friday evening Iyengar Yoga Class after advanced class (there actually is a brutal form of yoga, and we found it)
 - So Monday through Friday 6-8 hours training a day.
- Training Saturday and Sunday at the dojo and satellite dojo:
 - Morning Class 1 ½ hours
 - Training with sempai after class 1-3 hours.
 - Weekends expect 3-4 hours a day unless there is a seminar, then expect about 6 hours a day plus handling coordination of events, Sensei's accommodations, etc...
- Attend all weekend seminars at home dojo, Attend and test at Annual week long intensive training, Attend all dojo testing and act as uke, act as primary uke for all Sensei during regular classes.
- Carry Sensei's bags when travelling, be sure Sensei's arrangements are looked after, clean mats at dojo, clean the community areas at the dojo, clean the kitchen at the dojo, do the dishes, make

sure the bathrooms are clean, attend all dojo meetings, sign up for Chief Instructors early bird class at 5:30 AM (and always show up, because no one else will), look after guests and visitors, tend to visiting Sensei's, oversee weekend seminars and coordinate logistics, attend all testing, attend all regional events & seminars.

Uchi deshi training is all about servitude. It is rigorous. Uchi Deshi are held to higher standards in testing, as they are considered their teachers direct student; their technique is expected to exemplify the transmission from teacher to student. My time as uchi deshi tested my resolve to dedicate myself to an endeavor. There are no excuses for missing a class, birthdays, holidays, personal issues, family visitors, anniversaries, you name it better be at class if you are uchi deshi, and classes occur 364 days a year (in the States Christmas is observed).

What I learned as an uchi deshi I am still learning 15 years later. The program is designed to directly transmit knowledge from teacher to student via a very intense and demanding interpersonal relationship. I learned more in two years than I could absorb. My teacher had been an instructor for over 30 years when I became his student. The actual lessons could fill a twenty page dissertation, however in the martial arts there is no more intense or demanding commitment than an uchi deshi program.

I was able to attain my shodan rank in roughly 1/4 the time it would take the average 3 day a week student, but put in the equivalent training. Looking back, I learned more about life from Iseri Sensei than I did about martial arts, I recall seeing Sensei smiling once after a

particularly hard set of classes and I asked "Sensei you look happy, what is it" and he said "I am just enjoying this moment because it is not going to last." There is a lot to be learned from that statement alone..

On a funny side note: I once took Iseri Sensei to watch Wilson Sensei's Goju Ryu class in his Ventura, California Dojo and Iseri Sensei turned to me and said "Oh this is great, see how he is turning his hips? I've been trying to get you guys to do that for years!".

Additional Information – Steve Wilson

Sensei Todd had an experience that is rare and that helps preserve ancient traditions in a modern world. The commitment it takes to be an uchi deshi is one that most practitioners cannot fathom. Many of the greatest living martial artists were once uchi deshi.

Sensei Todd used to attend our Goju classes in order to fight with karate-ka to hone his Aikido. Not only does this demonstrate that he has no ego, but it was also a dangerous thing to do as in Aikido your opponents do not practice or excel at punching and kicking like karate-ka do. He put himself and his art in a strange environment. An environment that was not comfortable. Sensei Todd is brave and humble. His training has also developed a deep resolve and a wonderful personal character. His Sensei and Sempai once attended our gasshuku in Ventura. I appreciate him sharing his Uchi Deshi story with all of you. Sadly, Iseri Sensei passed away in 2001. Can you imagine how special Sensei Todd's time with his teacher was, now?

Someday I would like to have an uchi deshi. I am sure that Sensei would also be willing to have an uchi deshi at Hombu dojo. Before volunteering, read and think about Sensei

Todd's article. Could you and are you really willing to do it and able to meet the challenges?

Training When Older

This year at Gasshuku, Harold Silva, age 74 years young, tested for and obtained his Shodan. I was highly impressed and inspired by Harold's efforts.

I spoke with a doctor about the elder athlete and here are some things I learned. The most common injuries for the aged athlete include joint injuries, rotator cuff problems, Achilles tendonitis, sprains, and back pain.

The doctor told me that it is good for aged athletes to train a little bit often instead of training harder infrequently. Warm-ups are very important and flexibility training is very helpful in preventing injuries.

Conditioning should include strength training. Lifting lighter weights and doing higher repetitions. My doctor recommended using a weight you could do 30 reps with. Cardiovascular training should include 3-4 sessions per week for 20 minutes doing an activity that raises your heart rate 60-80%. Begin slowly and gradually increase your effort.

Summary of Yudansha Meeting

On Friday, April 3, 2009, the OGRKK held a Yudansha meeting at Hombu Dojo. Here is a summary of some of the topics discussed.

Sensei Spoke about how he is concerned that the Bakersfield dojo may not continue when he retires in the future (his retirement is thankfully, still far off in the future). He and Wilson Sensei shared with the group that the members in Bakersfield who desire to one-day teach and or operate the dojo need to voice

their interest to Sensei now so he can begin mentoring them.

Sensei also spoke about the challenges of teaching young children and involving their parents. Sensei was speaking about the importance of teaching children the discipline, etiquette, courtesy, and traditions of Goju Ryu in order to preserve it for future generations. Sensei shared how four of the most senior yudansha in the organization; Sensei Wilson, Sensei Allan, Sensei Tracie, and Sensei Gabe all began when they were children, so it demonstrates how important reaching children can be.

Sensei Allan shared that he plans on remaining at Hombu dojo and staying active even after Sensei retires. This is fantastic news as Sensei Allan is the senior ranking member at Hombu dojo. Even if he chooses to not teach full time one day, having his guidance and leadership at the dojo is very beneficial to everyone as he is an excellent teacher.

Sensei Kristin shared how the Vancouver dojo utilized a student handbook and schedules regular meetings with the child and their parents to discuss their progress. They also require parents to watch two classes each week so they are involved in their child's training and how that serves as encouragement for the child. She also shared how the kids are required to learn the basic commands and terminology, history, and etiquette.

Sensei Ron Madden suggested that the black belts at Hombu Dojo meet on a regular basis; perhaps monthly to discuss training, share ideas, and to make recommendations.

Wilson Sensei shared how he would like to see the membership participation increase for the

annual tournament and especially for the annual organizational Gasshuku. He also stressed how important it is for members to support events that the Shibu dojo hosts. He shared that although Sensei is the senior and most knowledgeable instructor in the organization, it is still important for members to attend other instructor's events to form relationships, support one another as a large family, and to be exposed to different types of instruction.

Wilson Sensei also shared that one-day when he retires from his job; he plans on traveling around to the Shibu dojo to provide instruction and support to members of the organization.

We also would like to see the organization grow, which means that black belt students who move should consider beginning karate programs at the local YMCA, Boys and Girls Clubs, local Church, City Recreation Departments, and or in a park. Teaching in this way contains no financial risks for the instructor as they do not have any overhead.

This next year, let's focus on all our students being members, supporting Shibu dojo, and increasing support at the annual tournament and gasshuku. Organizations are about relationships and we should all focus on developing and fostering our relationships within the organization.

Go Visit!

OGRKK members have a lot of places that they can go and visit, enjoy local activities and train in karate with members of our organization. Members can go visit Ventura, CA and train with Sensei Gabe. Ventura has the beach and a lot of fun things to go see and do.

Members can also go to Strathmore, CA and train and visit with Sensei Philip. For Hombu dojo members, this is a short 40 minute drive.

If you desire to see the great northwest go visit Sensei Dennis and Sue Pfendler. It is beautiful up there and there is a ton to see and do. It is a great place to vacation and they have a beautiful commercial dojo.

If Chicago is your planned destination, Sempai Jason is there and is always happy to have training partners. He has a dojo in his basement and he and his brother train regularly. They also know where all of the good eating places and tourist locations are in Chicago. Go have a deep dish pizza where deep dish was invented and then go work off the calories at Jason's home dojo.

If the Rocky Mountains are your destination, please come and see me. I have a garage dojo with three students. We are also happy to have visitors and there is a ton to do here. If you like hiking, mountain biking, fishing, camping, or white water rafting, Colorado is the place.

Of course OGRKK members from all of our affiliated dojo are also welcome to go train at Hombu dojo.

All OGRKK members can visit our Shibu dojo and train while visiting free of charge. Summer is here, gas is cheap, consider hitting the road to have some fun, develop relationships, and train while on vacation.

Kobudo Seminar July 11-12, 2009

On the above dates, Sensei Wilson is hosting a two-day kobudo seminar here in Colorado Springs. The seminar will cover Bo, Sai, Tonfa, and Oar. Basics, Renzoku, Kumi Bo, and Kata will be covered in-depth. The fee will be \$50 per person and includes lunch on Saturday.

College Course ~ By Dennis Pfendler

Sensei Dennis and Sue Pfendler have proposed a 16 session Goju Ryu class to a local college. They are generous enough to share the details in this article so that others who may be interested in trying to develop a course at their local college will have an idea of what to submit. They teach this course out of their dojo.

#1 – Sanchin Kata – Traditional Okinawan Goju Ryu Sanchin Kata – Dennis Pfendler/ Instructor

- History of origin of Sanchin Kata as a "health" kata(form)
- Sanchin stance(hourglass stance) movement in Sanchin & purpose
- Breath work of the kata
- Kata pattern
- Body conditioning techniques

Teaching objective: To instill the basic intention of Okinawan Goju Ryu Sanchin Kata for grounding, hard/soft techniques, self body conditioning and breath work.

Participant Goal: Gain body awareness and control of breath for defense, strength and improved health.

#2 – San Dan Gi – Pre-arranged Continuous Partner Sparring Drills – Dennis Pfendler/Instructor

- This drill set needs no gear – just focused partners
- Progressive drill starting stationary with hand techniques
- Adding of movement with the use of Sanchin(Goju Ryu signature hourglass stance) & Shiko dachi

- Finalizing drill set will involve close inside high/low fighting, using hand & stance techniques moving forward and back

Teaching objective: Close inside fighting using Goju stances of Sanchin & Shiko dachi with development of eye hand coordination in high/low fighting tactics.

Participant goal: To improve eye/hand coordination using Goju Ryu footwork and techniques

#3- Okinawan Goju Ryu Junbi undo (Warm-up Drills) including Hojo undo equipment – Dennis Pfendler/ Instructor

- Opening etiquette
- Traditional warm ups from feet(ground) to the heart(center)
- Incorporating Chishi to develop wrists/forearm strength
- Partner warm-ups – no need for gym equipment
- Body conditioning with partners
- Partner stretches for increasing flexibility

Teaching objective: To teach the basic concepts involved in Goju Ryu warm-ups & conditioning

Participant goal: To improve their own capabilities to better perform their martial art style
Equipment: Hojo undo equipment (Chishi – Okinawan free weights 5lb) we will provide.

#4- Gekisai Dai Ichi Renzoku Continuous Movement – Dennis Pfendler/Instructor

- No need to worry about learning the kata(form)
- Techniques will be taught in small segments
- Partners will learn both role of attacker (Tori) and defender (Uke-blocker)
- Movement will be both continuously forward(pushing/leading) and backward(receiving/disrupting)
- Timing & distance will be incorporated
- The understanding of sharing center will be taught

Teaching objective: To teach continuous fighting movement with partners using Gekisai Dai Ichi Kata to develop a more complete defense tactic.

Participant goal: To work past the one/two technique barrier to become more confident in continuous technique defense to disarm your

attacker physically and more importantly emotionally disrupt their fighting plan.

Additional Classes:

- Kakie – push hands drills
- Women’s Self Defense
- Reactionary skill drills – using 3 point focus
- Footwork drills- Goju low stance/grounding drills using Sanchin dachi, shiko dachi (straddle leg stance)& neko ashi dachi(cat stance)

**All class techniques will be taught in English and Japanese! Fun!

Mind versus Body

By Steve Wilson

I recall learning karate as a young boy. I did not understand anything; I simply copied what I saw and did what I was told. Many years later, understanding developed about things I had learned many years before. We learn some things with our minds and some things with our bodies. When we participate in a physical activity, especially during the prime of our lives, our bodies learn the movement or activity well, and if that same activity or movement is repeated thousands of times, it can actually become a part of us. Often what we learn with our bodies will outlast what we learned by watching or reading.

Sometimes when I am teaching I cannot recall how to properly do something, until I stop trying to remember and just do it. This is because my mind does not correctly remember what my body can recall without thought.

Often students think that what they are doing is what they were taught. However, unless they have done the movement thousands of times they may not be accurately recalling what they heard or what they saw.

When I attend seminars and learn new techniques or routines I seldom can recall them correctly a year later, because I do not go home and practice those techniques thousands of times so that my body will learn them and remember them for me.

As a human being, I make mistakes. I've practiced karate for thirty-six years and I still make mistakes. But I have discovered that the majority of the time when a student asks me something about a kata, I correctly recall it the way I was taught it. I finally figured out why that is. I began training with Higaonna Sensei in 1987. I was 26 years of age; I was in my prime. I was his 43rd student in America. As such, Higaonna Sensei had the time and chose to standardize me personally to his method of karate. He then made me perform each move over and over again until I was certain I could do no more.

In short, I learned with my body and my body remembers it. I did not learn the art from tapes or from watching others. I learned by being made to do it. Because of this, when my mind fails me, my body usually recalls correctly. When my students ask me specifics about how to do something in a kata, I will usually do it correctly if I demonstrate it without thought. Correctly being defined as matching what Higaonna Sensei does on tape or in his books. On the other hand, if I think about it, I may tell them incorrectly.

Personally, I feel that one's accuracy and correctness of technique is greatly compromised if they are not actually doing the techniques on a regular basis. In my opinion, the best way to maintain our tradition as we were taught it is to practice it frequently and by doing a lot of repetitions.

It has been my experience that when I focus on teaching and not training, I teach myself and my students' right into errors. By training daily, I alleviate this problem for the most part. I try to do some kata every day of my life, because I have learned from personal experience that I make errors when I quit practicing. If I practice regularly, my body remembers what it learned by having been made to do thousands of repetitions.

I have always prided myself on my memory. Teachers in college have told me that my memory skills are far above normal. I am also a speed reader and the amount of material read that I comprehend is far, far, above normal. Yet, in karate, I make mistakes regarding technique more often when I use my mind than when I rely on my body. I'm convinced that one's mind and intelligence does not ensure correct memorization of the techniques. Personally, I feel the body is more accurate at recalling the technique correctly than the mind is.

This is why it is so important that we do thousands of repetitions and that we continue to always practice what we have been taught. I have seen many, many, teachers who's technique and recall of the techniques in their mind, have significantly degraded because they quit practicing. Just as we cannot retain a correct or accurate jump shot in basketball without continuing to do jump shots; we cannot retain a high level of performance or correctness of technique without practicing them regularly. Knowing them in great depth at one time in our life, such as when we passed a high level grading, will not ensure that we retain them correctly in the future if we do not continue practicing. We must continue to physically practice for the rest of our lives, or our recollection of the art will falter.