

## Inside

- Duck V-ballers challenge Chinese See story Page 2B
- The local sport of footbagging See story Page 8B

# SIDELINES

Emerald Sports Supplement

# Karate

“Kara” was taken from the Zen word “ku,” which means “inner dilemma or the emptiness of the inner soul.” In Japanese, “te” means hand, art or any activity done with the hand or body. As a martial art and an increasingly popular sport, karate is a combination of physical movement and psychology, and the study of karate has been University instructor Bob Graves’ discipline and recreation for the last twenty-seven years.

In 1957, he began training in Japan under the schooling of Kawaguchi. While still in the military, he also studied in Kaohsiung, Taiwan and later moved to Oregon to begin teaching at a dojo (training school) in Salem. He finally came to Eugene and started instructing University classes through the SEARCH program in 1969. As well as teaching at the Eugene Dojo, Graves works with the University of Oregon Karate Club, officiates at student examinations, coordinates seminars, and evaluates teaching methods at dojos throughout the Northwest region.

“My mission when I came up here was to educate the Northwest in karate,” he says. “My main effort is teaching and running the judging seminars. I’m an official and I have to continually keep training officials.”

He also teaches quarterstaff or “bo” fighting which uses long bamboo sticks. His classes at the University are oriented toward students at the beginning level. Students begin by learning the basic movements and philosophy of karate and are tested at the end of the term by demonstrating the stances and kata, or routines, they have learned. For those who want to pursue more rigorous and formal study at the Eugene Dojo, dedication and a serious attitude toward the art are expected.

Karate is taught progressively at levels I, II and III, but “it’s all beginner’s training for the first nine months to one year,” he says. More intensive study for the first-degree black belt comes after that.

In spite of the stereotype that martial arts are only for those with wiry bodies and incredible speed, students of all shapes, weights and sizes take part in Graves’ classes. The basic foundation, he says, is supposed to be applicable to anyone capable of normal body movement. “As in all Budo arts . . . individuals have to start to deal with what they have for equipment. If they’re a big, heavy person, they may find it comforting to know that they’re difficult to damage, but they may have problems in maneuverability, stamina and quickness. . . on the other hand, a person that’s very small may find themselves to be extremely fragile physically, but on the plus side of it, they may find they have extreme speed available to them. . . of course, there’s the small people who aren’t fast and there’s the big people who are extremely fast. You have to satisfy all of these and it’s difficult.”

The first and second degrees of the black belt are earned when the student can demonstrate basic movements and their combinations. Through the third, fourth, and fifth degrees, the

student essentially conducts an individualized research project on the capabilities of his body and then goes before judges for testing. “You’ll get up there in front of a panel and you will show what you have found you can do best,” Graves says. “You may pass or not pass, that’s not important, but the feedback (is) . . . they may say, ‘I think you’re on the right track, but try this,’ but that ‘try this’ may take another five years of work.”

From first to fifth degree, physical development is emphasized, and from the fifth to tenth, the student begins conducting personal research. A person of tenth degree status is virtually expected to work at an international level in extended research, projects and seminar coordination, he says.

From his experiences in working with men and women, Graves says he has found that women can train as aggressively as their male counterparts. Women’s martial arts have existed for thousands of years in Japan, he adds, and today, many women are finding that in addition to the hard exercise and personal defense skills that karate offers, it can also help increase self-esteem.

“Whether the women survive in the classes,” he says, “depends on the instructor. An instructor can make or break the spirit of the class and set it up to be so masculine-oriented that women just don’t feel comfortable in it, or there are some instructors who in all honesty simply don’t know how to train with women.”

“I think the challenge is in matching up the students so that (they) don’t kill each other off in the course of training, because there’s always people who are bigger or stronger, or have a more aggressive nature.”

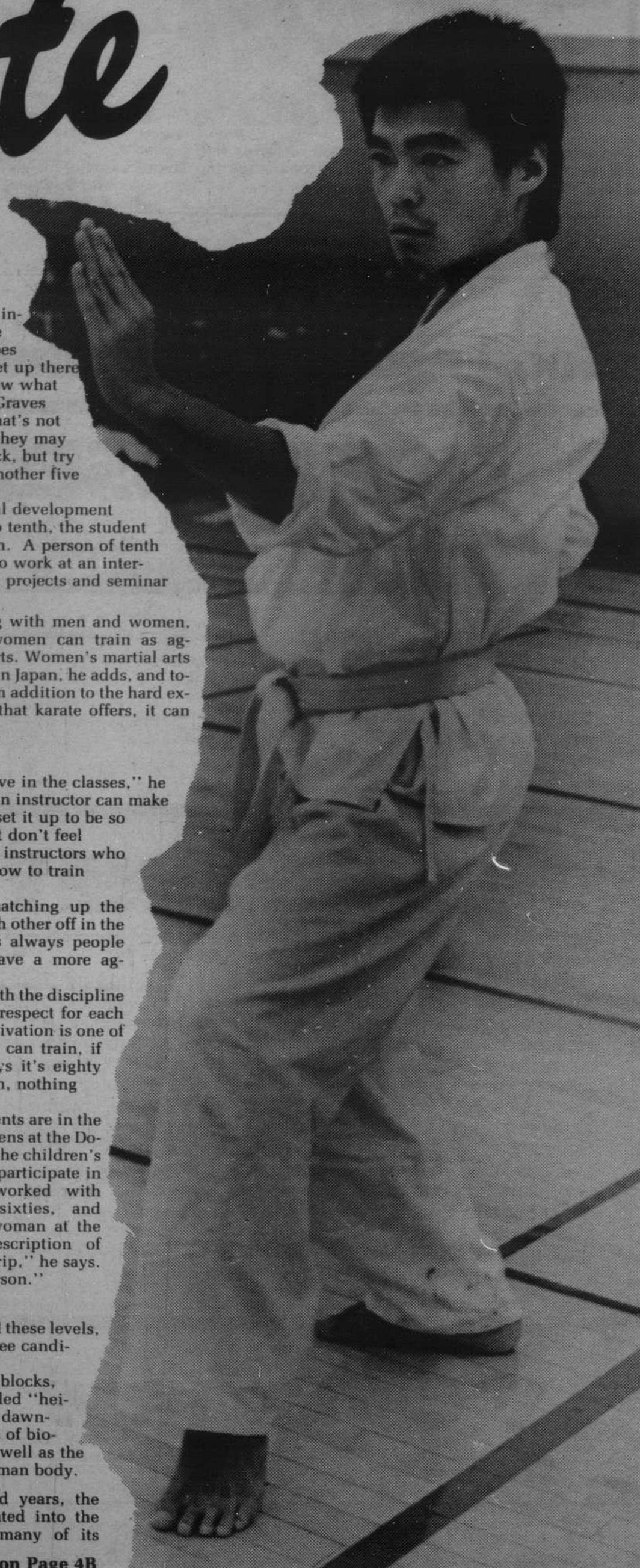
The men and women who stick with the discipline are able to develop a great deal of respect for each other, he says, and stresses that motivation is one of the key elements. “I think anyone can train, if they’re motivated. . . Nishiyama says it’s eighty percent. He says without motivation, nothing else follows.”

he University, most of Graves’ students are in the 18-25 age bracket, but the range widens at the Dojo. Many as young as eight come to the children’s classes, and people in their forties participate in the adult classes. Graves has worked with students in their fifties and sixties, and remembers a sixty-four year old woman at the downtown dojo who fit the description of “grandma sunshine.” “She was a trip,” he says. “She was just the most positive person.”

Learning continues even beyond these levels, and the minimum age for 10th degree candidates is seventy.

Initially, students learn punches, blocks, kicks, stances and the first kata, called “heianshodan,” which means “early or dawn-ing.” They are taught fundamentals of bio-mechanical movement and force as well as the strengths and weaknesses of the human body.

Through progressive months and years, the psychology of the art is incorporated into the physical aspects. Karate derives many of its



Continued on Page 4B