

# Sensei Says

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This month I am giving myself (and you) a break from my writing. I have a guest writer for "Sensei Says." Actually, I never met the author, and he certainly didn't write this just for us. Sensei Chibana was one of the greatest Okinawan karate masters of the 20th century. I find his words inspirational, and I hope you do, too.

And for those who think they are too old to practice karate — read closely the words of a Master.

- Alan Best

"When you train, you have to devote yourself only to the way of karate - think of nothing else. Do not think of others, or what they may think. You must develop the ability to focus your mind, hands and feet strongly. You must not only learn body movements but also research and study the art.

You should develop and improve yourself before you reach the age of fifty. Your body naturally begins to deteriorate after fifty years old so you must then adjust your training accordingly. If after fifty you still train every day then you may not decline so much. I myself have noticed a decline at fifty, but I don't think I declined much at all between fifty and sixty years of age. Of course, you cannot help deteriorating to a degree but if you continue training you will not age so rapidly, even between seventy and eighty years of age. Therefore, train continuously.

In the olden days we trained at karate as a martial art, but now they train at karate as a gymnastic sport. I think we must avoid treating karate as a sport – it must be a martial art! Your fingers and the tips of your toes must be like arrows; your arms must be like iron. You have to think that if you kick, you try to kick the enemy dead. If you punch you must thrust to kill. If you strike, then you strike to kill the enemy. This is the spirit you need in training. The effort required is great, but you can strain the body by doing too much. So keep in mind your condition.

Years ago I wished to leave my name in karate-do, and I trained very hard. Now I think my name will remain a little in karate-do.

Not only do we need physical training, we need to think for ourselves, studying and researching the kata and their applications.

It is vitally important to understand kata and train your body to develop the core of karate. You can achieve a five or six times increase in body power if you train hard. Naturally, if you do this, you will be pleased with the result, so train very hard.

Whether you become great depends on two factors only – effort and study. Your movements must be sharp - never be slow - and when you train at kata your eyes will get sharper and your blocking and striking will get stronger.

Even when you reach the age of seventy or eighty you must continue your research with a positive attitude, always thinking "not yet, not yet."

- Chosin Chibana (1885 - 1969)