



Annette Lein Staff photographer

Kishi Karate master Nobuyuki Kishi instructs student Daniel Betancourt Jr., 10, during recent class at the studio at 1115 East Main St.

Kishi a discipline in old style

Karate method spartan, rigorous

By Dawn Bracely
Staff writer

The students and instructors practically bellow, "Osu!" "Osu!" to each other.

Osu, pronounced (Osh, as in ocean) means patience, respect and appreciation, and it is something the originator of Kishi Karate practices.

Nobuyuki Kishi visited the Kishi Karate center in Rochester last week, checking out the new dojo, or school, on the third floor at 1115 E. Main St. for the first time.

The doors to the large studio opened to a shiny wooden floor, hand-cleaned by students after each class, and an office neatly decorated in the traditional Japanese style. Kishi, a well-built, solid looking man, nodded his approval.

He spoke in broken English, conveying his meaning through images and feelings. Jose Rivera, longtime Kishi Karate follower and head of the local dojo, open for five months, understood him enough to translate.

Kishi, developed through 25 years of training, is about tradition, and the old way of doing things.

"He looks to simplify, and to stay away from the commercial aspects of karate," Rivera said. "What we use here is a traditional Japanese method of mental and physical conditioning."

Most classes last about one hour and 15 minutes, with all levels practicing, stretching and meditating together. One such class Kishi led while visiting Rochester showed how rigorously that time can be spent.

About 25 students of all shapes, sizes and ages worked out side-by-side. The grueling two-fisted push-ups and abdominal crunches showed on the faces of the students, who were grunting in agony.



Betancourt struggles to do some knuckle pushups. "It's real hard," he said of the Kishi discipline, "but . . . you get used to it."

"Try! Try!" Kishi yelled as he walked past the students, leaning on those holding half sit-ups.

The hard floor can be punishing, but prepares students for real-life settings.

"The training brings you to a level where you have enthusiasm

and confidence to do more," Rivera said.

"It's real hard, but once you keep on staying to it you get used to it," said 10-year-old Daniel Betancourt Jr. "I want to go all the way."

The youngster said he realizes he'll have to work hard to achieve

Kishi Karate

■ The grand opening of the local Kishi Karate school is Saturday. The school, or dojo, is at the corner of East Main and Goodman streets, 1150 E. Main, 3rd floor.

his goals.

Kishi trained vigorously under Mas. Oyama, founder of the Kyokushin style of karate. Kishi himself has taught in Japan, Taiwan and the U.S., and has a dojo in Shinjo, northern Japan.

He started teaching his own style seven years ago. Spiritual examination comes first in Kishi, he said, then physical conditioning.

"Everybody's measured by their own yard stick, and as long as you put your heart into everything you do . . . you start touching upon the spiritual aspects of training," Rivera said.

Training is sometimes very difficult, "sometimes very boring, but you must continue," Kishi added.

Americans, and modern-day Japanese for that matter, are anxious and spoiled, said Kishi. "Everything quickly, quickly, quickly. Quickly pick up, quickly go."

A person cannot expect to achieve everything in a short period of time.

"Karate is a lifelong discipline that you submit to and that you do, knowing that it's going to be uncomfortable, hard, difficult," Rivera said. "But, you submit and you train with all your heart and your soul, getting strength from the inside."

"We are our biggest challenge, and our biggest opponent. We will always tell ourselves, 'quit, quit, quit.'"

There are no flashy outfits, called a gi, in Kishi. A simple, white uniform with various colored belts show years of achievement.

"That brings it down to more of a human, spiritual level," Rivera pointed out. "You put the simplicity back in life." □