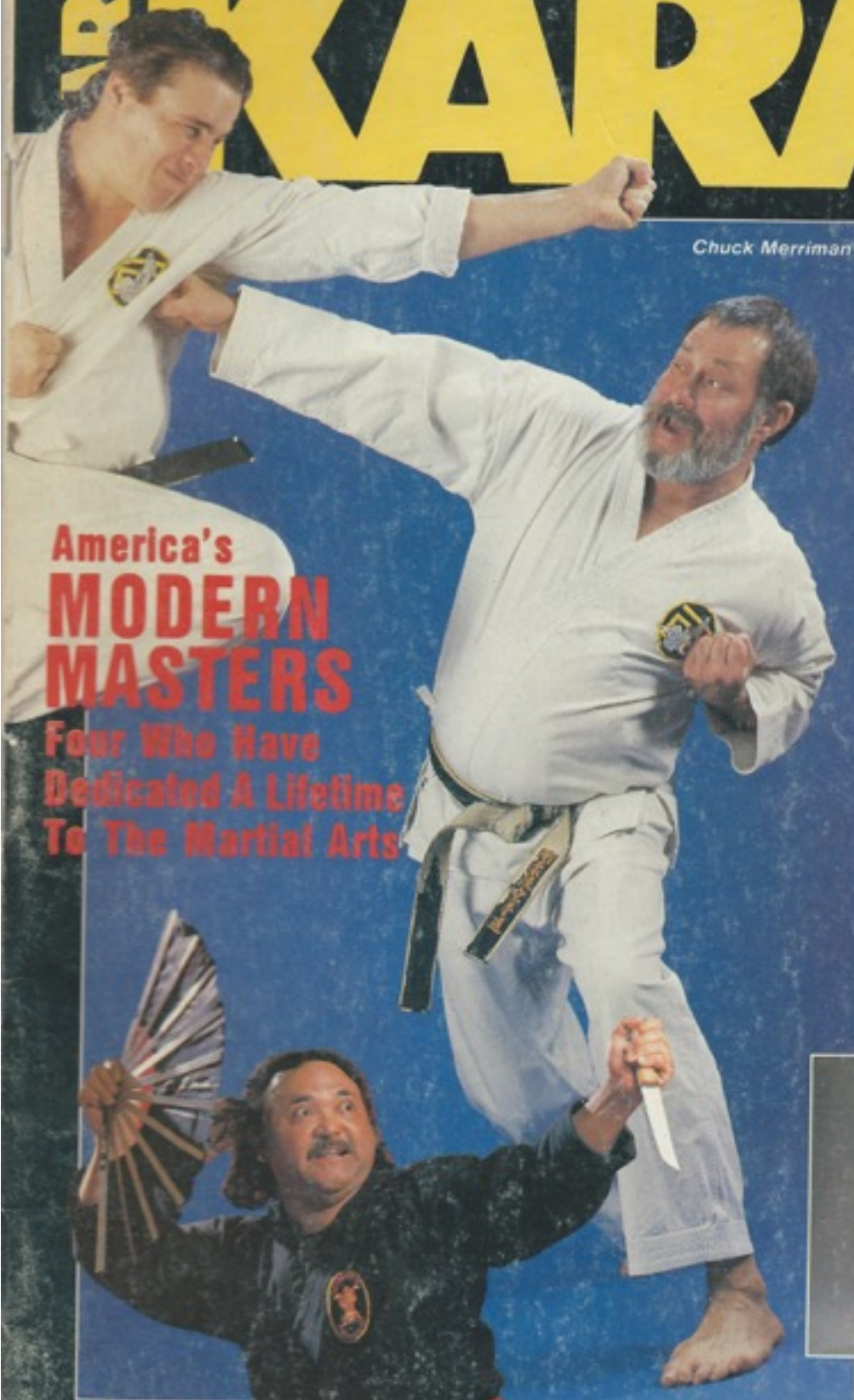


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KARATE

KARATE



Chuck Merriman

America's MODERN MASTERS

Four Who Have
Dedicated A Lifetime
To The Martial Arts

COMBAT JUDO

Basic Drills & Tactics

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Is It Practical For
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Gordon Doversola



Modern Masters of the Martial Arts

Our Western culture uses many terms to designate the achievement of excellence. Dr. or Prof. at the beginning of a name connotes the highest levels of vocational and academic accomplishment. In the art world, brilliance is acclaimed with honorifics like connoisseur, maestro and virtuoso. While in sports, those at the top of their game are known as all-stars or, simply, as pros.

In the same vein, any discussion of excellence in the martial arts will inevitably include the Asian term, "master." It is used to define talent (as in, "He's a master of the bo.") and as a title or designation of rank. Many feel it is overused and abused to the point of almost being meaningless.

"Nowadays, you've got kids calling themselves 'masters' and 'grand-masters,'" I heard one old-timer lament. "When I started," he went on to say, "It took 20 years in the art to become a master and at least 40 years to become a 'true' master."

The guy was joking, but he brought up a valid point. There still is, and always has been, more to being a master than physical talent and teaching ability. These are important, necessary attributes, but to be a MASTER requires something more, something spiritual.

Now don't get me wrong, I'm not saying a martial arts master is an enlightened being, a sage like Confucius or Lao Tzu. But in order to attain a stage of mastery over something as body/mind/spirit unifying as the martial arts, you've got to develop insight and self-awareness. You must have character and integrity. And you must love the arts. These traits require dedication and experience to cultivate, which takes time — lots of time.

The four martial artists profiled on the following pages embody the above listed characteristics. Each has devoted at least 20 (some 40 & 50) years to the mastery of their craft. They have helped the martial arts grow in America. They are part of its history. I respectfully submit that future generations, looking back, will view them as members of America's first generation of modern masters.

By Russell Maynard

Tracy Anderson get yellow one

Gordon Doversola

"The great power of the martial arts is in its ability to teach students how to set values in life and accomplish one's goals."

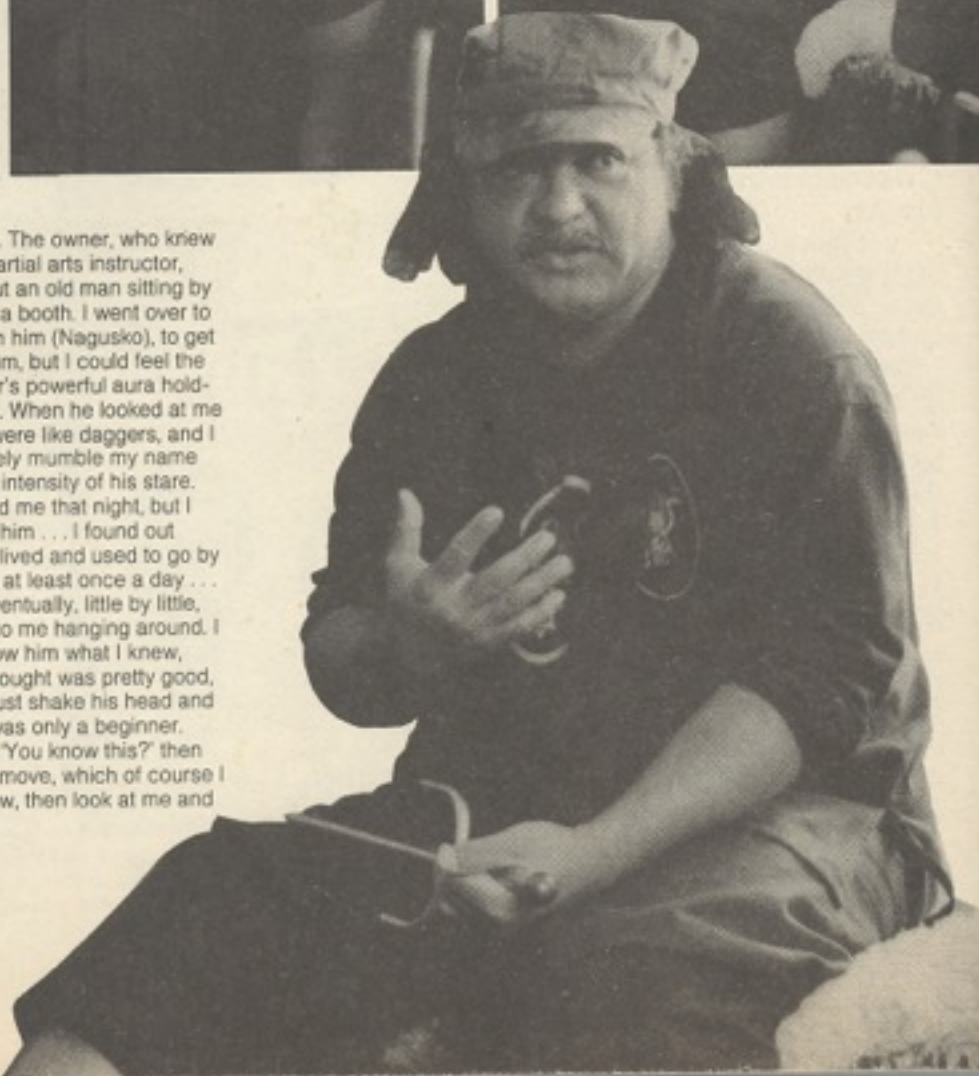


Born and raised in Honolulu, Hawaii, Doversola started his martial arts training at the tender age of 7. The Island's rich selection of martial arts allowed him to sample the menu of many styles, which he feasted on, obtaining instructor ratings in kendo, kenpo, jujutsu and kung-fu. After his military service during the Korean Conflict, Doversola moved to Los Angeles, California in the early 50s. There, his insatiable appetite for martial arts knowledge led to the table of shihan (grandmaster of a style) Teiken Nagusko. One taste of Okinawa-te and Doversola was hooked.

The remarkable, reclusive, recalcitrant Nagusko had studied under the great one-armed master Motobu in Okinawa, who passed on the lineage of the system before he died. And in the same tradition, an already aged and ill Nagusko saw in Doversola the potential to become the next shihan of the art.

As Doversola recounts, "The first time I met shihan Nagusko was in a diner I used to go to

after work. The owner, who knew I was a martial arts instructor, pointed out an old man sitting by himself in a booth. I went over to speak with him (Nagusko), to get to know him, but I could feel the old master's powerful aura holding me off. When he looked at me his eyes were like daggers, and I could barely mumble my name under the intensity of his stare. He ignored me that night, but I kept after him . . . I found out where he lived and used to go by his house at least once a day . . . and he eventually, little by little, got used to me hanging around. I would show him what I knew, which I thought was pretty good, but he'd just shake his head and tell me I was only a beginner. He'd say, 'You know this?' then do a little move, which of course I didn't know, then look at me and



Shihun Aug 28 87
Doversola



Doversola has been in the arts for almost half a century, the last 30 years have been devoted to teaching Okinawa-te to students like Michael Pecina who began training with the shihan when he was only 7 years old.

shake his head again.

"I remember, like it happened yesterday, when he accepted me as a student, I'd been hanging around and bugging him for lessons for months. One night he turned that stare of his on me and said, 'You ready to die?' I had to take a step back... you could tell he was deadly serious... but I found the courage to say yes. He looked through me, said 'Good,' then after a pause said, 'The training may kill you.'"

Doversola quit teaching; quit everything but eating, sleeping and his job in order to dedicate himself to learning Okinawa-te from master Nagusko. Doversola called his girlfriend and told her, "I'm going away on a trip and won't be able to see you for a while — about five years." Nagusko fed him everything he knew, and Doversola ate it up like a starving man for over three years of intense training.

In 1957, after Nagusko's return to Okinawa, the designated successor of Okinawa-te opened his first school to the public. Since then shihan Doversola has never closed his doors, nor changed the powerful fighting art he has taught to such martial art luminaries as Joe Lewis, Jim Kelly

and Dan Inosanto, to name but a few.

Almost half a century in the arts; 30 years teaching Okinawa-te to kids and their kids a generation later. What has kept Doversola at it so long? It's not for fame, certainly not for financial fortune...

There is a picture on the wall of Doversola's humble dojo (where the equipment is worn and frayed like the black belt of an old master. "These mats have seen a lot of blood and sweat," he likes to say). Taken back in the 60s, it's a photo of six young men in fighting posture. The shihan likes to point to the (then) young men, "kids" he calls them, and reflect on how their lives turned out. "This one is an engineer now," he says. "This guy went to college and became a..."

Success stories. Doversola believes in the power of the martial arts to teach students how to set values in life and how to accomplish one's goals. Doversola has accomplished his goal, he lives a life of value to others.

For more information on the Okinawa-Te Organization's schools, write to Gordon Doversola, 3178 Glendale Blvd., L.A., CA 90039.

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