

# KAZE

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WELLINGTON SEIDO KARATE

KAIZEN ACADEMY

2012 ISSUE





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## **Kaze**

### **Kaze 2012**

This issue of *Kaze* looks very different from the glossy colour versions we've produced recently. *Kaze* will now appear as an annual, online magazine that you can download or print off from a PDF.

The change is more than about saving some pinetrees – it's part of rejigging the ways that we get our information to you. And there has been a lot of rejigging this year. We revamped our website so you can stay up to date with events happening in the Brooklyn and other Wellington dojos. Our e-newsletter now arrives in your inbox to remind you of classes and events each month, and our new Facebook site provides instant information (and photos) as well as giving you a space to comment on what's going on, organise karate social functions and the like. This month we also launch the Brooklyn Members' Forum where you can talk karate, post stories about your gradings or discuss other things of a martial arts nature.

We hope that you find something to interest you in all of these exciting changes.

Bronwyn Dalley for Kaizen Academy



## **2012, the year that was ...**

In case you can't remember, this will refresh your memory.

### **Camps and clinics**

The year started and ended with camps, at Forrest Lakes and Woodend Beach respectively for the annual North Island and Christchurch camps. The biennial North Island Black Belt clinic at Tauhara in Taupo provided another full-on weekend of karate for keen folks.

### **Comings and goings**

We got some new members this year, either coming through as beginners, joining us from other styles, moving to Wellington, or returning to training after a break. Welcome to all. We farewelled some long-term members as well – Chris Stone to Christchurch, and Sensei Ed and Sensei Marion to Auckland.

### **Belts and stripes**

There have been a lot of gradings this year: the regular general gradings, promotions to shodan, nidan and sandan, and at end the year, the promotions at Christchurch camp to yondan (Sensei Ralph and Sensei Ian) and godan (Kyoshi Phil). And something that happens very rarely – a promotion to rokudan (Jun Shiha Doug). Congratulations to everyone.

### **On the mat**

Plenty of folks got out on the mat to compete or be involved in some way with the quadrangular and North Island tournaments in the middle of the year. All useful preparation for something even bigger in June 2013...

### **Shows and tells**

We introduced the Monday night special modules in January, and barring public holidays, there were different classes every Monday all year – fitness, yoga, tourney training, pilates, kata bunkai, sparring techniques, wrestling and grappling, points sparring. There were workshops on teaching, sessions on massage, physiotherapy and chiropractic, meditation classes, and pointers on preparing a training programme and gearing up for shodan. Thanks to all who took the sessions and who supported them.

### **New gizmos**

The website relaunched with a new address, a new design, and new content. Nicely linked into this is the Facebook site, and the monthly e-newsletter. Thanks to Ed Goode and Amy McNabb,



gizmo meisters. Behind the scenes, Kyoshi Peter F did magic with various bits of electronica to make light of the administrivia that has to happen to keep things running smoothly. You may not have noticed this, which is the idea.

## **Parties**

We had a great training session and birthday bash for Jun Shihan Ben, followed up less than a month later with the Christmas function, held in the park on one of those perfect Wellington days (that come about once every 7 years). Excellent events both, and big thanks to all who did the hard work of organising and clearing up.



## **Jun Shihan Ben reflects on his trip to Honbu in July 2012**



I was supposed to attend Kaicho's 70th surprise birthday party in February 2012 but my daughter Angela was expecting her second child and was keen for me to be there when the baby arrived. So the plan changed and I went in July instead. I made the announcement to entice some people to accompany me but the timing and cost prevented all but Senpai Daniel Beker from travelling, en route home from a friend's wedding in Europe. Senpai Daniel stayed for one week while I stayed for two and trained most days except Sundays.

We were the only visitors in Honbu at the time, so we made sure that we got Kaicho's and Nidaime's time regarding the Seido syllabus. I remember going to Honbu few years back doing kata to the count and being out of synch with everyone else. Now, we are on top of our syllabus and in synch with everyone else.

We also had the opportunity to train at Johshin Honzan at Westchester in the White Plains. This is a magnificent dojo – 'right out of The Matrix' you could say. Getting there was by train and then taxi or, if we were lucky, Kaicho would wait to pick us up at the train station and take us to the dojo. Mrs Nakamura made sure we had plenty to eat before training and that we got the train on time to get back to Honbu for our next class.

It was great seeing the familiar faces again and to train alongside them from time to time. Kyoshi Meredith's warm smile meant that the Kiwis were in town! Kaicho's hospitality included a few trips to his favourite restaurant after class as well as one-on-one training sessions.

The two weeks at Honbu went quickly and I had to leave for Berlin to visit my grandkids. I haven't been to Berlin before so each day was sightseeing in this city with lots of history – the concentration camp, the Berlin Wall and monuments from WWII.

## Club Captain's report



I am very pleased to welcome Dom as boys' Club Captain, taking over from Senpai Rhys, who has recently graded to Shodan. Thank you to Senpai Rhys, for your contribution. Dom and I now share

the role, in the interests of gender equity, acting as etiquette police, morale minder, advocate for club members, and conveyor of ideas to the governing BBs on behalf of members. More simply, as one senior BB gleefully acknowledged, the CC is the Club's AA, Agony Aunt.

That has some appeal. So in this Kaze I am introducing Possum, a martial arts exponent of many years' experience, whose name has deep and historical origins, to whom you are invited to address all your gripes and grievances and to share all your musings and mutterings. Possum will respond appropriately, publishing replies in each Kaze or responding directly to you, if you would prefer, in those long, lonely months between Kaze publications.

Please seek me out at the dojo, or write to Possum at my email address, below, or deliver me a handwritten note. I have authority to speak for Possum and would be happy to meet up to talk – at the dojo or for coffee outside in the real world. I always have time for coffee. So through me you can tell Possum all your problems, or share with her all your inspired thoughts. The first three emails to Possum are published in this edition of Kaze, below.

Possum and her role, for reasons again deep and historical which I need not explain, was inspired by the 17th century Chinese kung fu fighter created by Art Sang, of Bro-Town fame, in a graphic novel called "Shaolin Burning." Art Sang's martial arts story has been shortlisted for the picture-book category of the NZ Post Children's Book awards. In the story, told in a Polynesian manga art comic style, a girl baby by the name of Plum Blossom was a baby who survived the 17th century burning of the Shaolin Temple and, by the fortuitous intervention of a Buddhist nun, narrowly escaped the baby tower where unwanted girl babies were ditched. She grew up to become a fierce kung fu fighter and a respected teacher.

The story is about her journey through Buddhist philosophy in pursuit of a murderous monk to avenge the death of her kung fu hero Ma Ti Fu Ken (based on the real, but late NZ poet Marty F... Edmonds) and she learns, like we hear often from Jun Shihan Ben, that Kung Fu (read

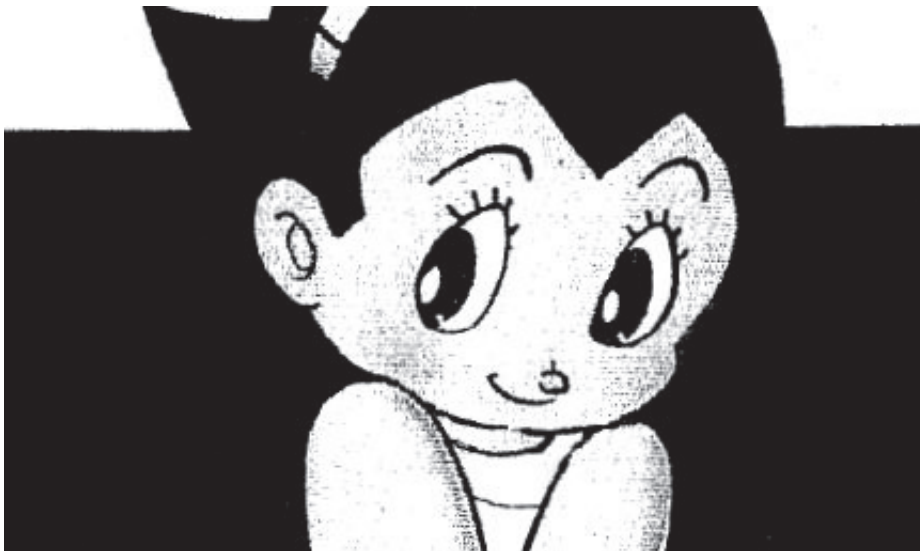


Karate) is not about fighting, it is about life. The subtheme, carried by the murderous monk, is about letting go of self-doubt. It is such a great read for martial arts enthusiasts and comic book readers I would like to make it available to others to read by establishing a Club Library for it – and inviting other contributions.

Having been inspired by Plum Blossom in “Shaolin Burning” and having been introduced to the Agony Aunt, Possum, there is something else I would like to do as Club Captain. That is to establish a club library. I would like to appoint myself Inaugural Librarian (unless there is a clamour of other interest) and invite you to donate books or videos, including PhD theses on historical or entomological or topics or about electric cars, or novels or stories you have written but not yet published, or for the X and Y generations, you might have links to websites or other electronic entertainments which we can somehow register or list. Please be liberal with your contributions or ideas about how the Club Library might best meet members’ needs and interests.

Unless someone else volunteers for the role, I will keep a register of materials available for borrowing, and I have permission to find space at the front desk. I have drafted operational rules, see below, but please respond with ideas to improve on the concept or to improve the rules. All ideas and contributions are welcome. So, let’s build up a library, and please write to Possum – or call me instead for coffee.

### **“Osu! Possom”**



Osu! Possum,

I am afraid of sparring. I have stopped going to sparring classes. That makes me feel much better. I am not so tired and bruised at the end of the week, but it has not improved my sparring. I am wondering if it is possible to improve my karate without sparring.

*Wimpy Walter*



Dear WW

Karate is about sparring (with very few approved exceptions). So get your butt into every sparring class that is available. We currently have three classes a week conducted by very fine instructors, and attended by considerate and skilled karateka. The only way to fix your fear of sparring is to face it, embrace it. And go to every sparring class on the timetable. You will get bruised and tired but you will not look back.

*Osu! Possum*

Osu! Possum

What is with the sitting down every time the instructor starts talking? Some people do it and some don't. Do we have to?

*Manky Ankles and Knackered Knees*

Dear MA and KK

Yes, out of courtesy to the instructor you sit in seiza when he or she addresses the class or demonstrates. It is respectful to the instructor and it ensures others can see. It helps to focus attention. The same rule applies – this is important – when senior karateka (blackbelts) are demonstrating during or at the end of kata class. All those on the sideline should be in seiza. And no talking while the instructor is talking.

*Osu! Possum*

Osu! Possum

I've been doing karate for about seven months and I really like it but I only just make it to class and then I leave straight at the end. I haven't made many friends and the brown and black belts still scare me to talk to. It always seems like it's just me that doesn't know anyone. Have you got any tips that might help me break the ice with people at the dojo or stop being scared all the time?

*Alone and scared (7th Kyu)*

The special thing about Seido is that you are invited to be yourself when you walk in the door of the dojo. You take off your hat and coat and all the worries of the outside world, says Shihan, and whether you are sociable and smart, or shy and short-sighted and goofy and gangly, or (Buddha forbid) hopeless at push-ups, you are welcome. People get to know you and trust you the way you are. So, just be yourself, and remember the three Cs: **commitment**, and you will learn how to do fabulous push-ups; **courage** (both physical and emotional) and you will get through those stripe tests; and **compassion**, for newcomers, who need your encouragement, and for the BBs and 1st and 2nd Kyus who might be having a bad day even though they appear to be brimming with confidence. And go to lots of classes so you will have a wider selection of



friends to choose from.

*Osu! Possum*

## **Draft rules for the library**

- Any books or videos, or PhDs, or original writing, published or unpublished, may be donated to the library.
- There will be a register of the books and videos and other materials in the library; and a record kept of their issue.
- Members are invited to offer the Library advice is welcome about an electronic register.
- Members only may borrow materials.
- Books or videos may be kept for 3 weeks.
- Books or videos donated will be returned, if possible, to the original donee, on that person's request.
- Donees need to be aware that there is a risk that books and videos may go astray, in spite of the best efforts of the Club Librarian.
- If there is a special request for a particular item, efforts will be made to find the item.
- For overdue returns there will be an appropriate number of push-ups at the next class attended by the borrower.
- For lost or damaged books or videos there will be a commensurate number of dojo lengths of gorilla walks at the next class attended by the borrower.
- Leaving the Club to avoid payment is not an option.



## Preparing for a senior kyu grading

*We (Amy and Cath) graded to 1st kyu in 2011. Both the grading and the preparation required were a step up from what we had experienced previously. Since that time, we have had numerous discussions about our experiences, and we thought it might be a good idea to share our thoughts with all kyu grades. While our thoughts are aimed primarily at those going for senior kyu gradings (green belt and above), they apply equally well to any of the kyu grades.*

Osu! Although 'Osu' can be said in many ways, it actually comes from the term 'oshi shinobu' which is to persevere with patience. We must remember this in our training. There is no rush to get through the grades. Even if one of our goals is to reach shodan, we should not be in such a hurry that we 'scrape through' our kyu gradings. We want to perform to the best of our ability. We all know what we put in is what we get out. It is also a sign of respect and thanks to our teachers if we are able to demonstrate that we have prepared well. And finally, we want to perform our best for the sake of fellow students and the dojo as a whole. As senior kyu grade karateka, we are often looked up to by new and junior students. To a great extent, we set the standard, being the example from which junior students learn. Our etiquette in the dojo, our dedication to training, and the spirit and effort we give to our gradings shapes the whole feel of the dojo.



So, what's important in ensuring we perform our best on grading day? We need to know our syllabus, and know it well! We should be prepared to perform all aspects of it, both hidari and migi, and be able to respond immediately to out of sequence commands. We should be convincing in our actions, demonstrating what we know with great spirit and intent, and be fit enough to perform with real intensity throughout the grading. And don't get caught out by forgetting earlier syllabus – it is important to constantly revise so we continue to build on the



foundations of our prior learning. The colour of our belt represents little if we forget what we have previously learned.

In addition, we need to know at least the basic history and philosophy of Seido, the meanings and origins of our kata, why we kiai and use ibuki breathing etc, and be familiar with the relevant Japanese terms – you will be tested on your knowledge of such things at gradings. Being committed to learning about all aspects of Seido also deepens what karate means to us and, consequently, what we get out of it.

By what means will we achieve all this? It is essential that we take responsibility for our own learning. It is not up to our teachers alone to ensure we are 100% prepared for grading through class work. The great thing is that the dojo is brimming with friendly people willing to help us. So, if you feel you don't know something, ask your teachers and fellow students. There are also plenty of students who will be happy to practise with you before class – again, we all need to constantly revise. In this regard, you may find it helps you keep earlier syllabus fresh by offering to practise with junior students. And in terms of the history and philosophy, there are some excellent books available through the dojo and at the library – you will be at a great advantage if you take the time to read and reflect on them.

We must also have intent and be committed to our training. We need to try our best – not just at the grading, but in every class – in every technique, every kiai and every osu! The way we practise is the way we will perform. If we train at half speed and hope to pick up the pace on grading day, the body (or brain) won't know how to cope. The intensity of our training must match the intensity demanded of us in a grading. As the saying goes, “the more you sweat in training, the less you bleed in battle”, so get sweating! In addition to ensuring a quality workout, we need to be attending classes regularly throughout the week, every week. We must also be prepared to increase the number of classes and/or add some extra fitness training when preparing for a grading. Remember, grading is just the icing on the cake. The hard work you put in prior is what counts most – it is what shows through on grading day.

*With regards to preparation, Cath speaks here about some practical planning...*

I'm a compulsive list maker and, while this method of planning won't suit everyone, some sort of plan is essential. Break up your time into blocks and reserve time for syllabus practice and for fitness in addition to regular classes. If you've started training sufficiently in advance, you can build a few peaks of fitness into your plan. Go hard out for a month, then take a week off, then go hard out again, etc. You'll find that you come back to it with renewed energy and will be able to achieve more than if you just slog it out for three months building up to a grading.

There is a huge amount of syllabus in Seido. I counted the individual pieces of syllabus I needed for my first kyu grading, and it totalled 65. Then I frightened myself by multiplying it by all the things that are routinely done migi and migi ura (128!). However, given an awareness of the sheer volume of syllabus, I was able to break up my available time into chunks and make sure I didn't leave anything out. It's important to remember that the only thing that will prepare you for sparring is sparring class; it's called 'fighting fit' for a reason, and no amount of time in the gym will prepare you for sparring.



There are huge benefits to training with others. Very few of us can achieve anything in isolation. And this includes karate. Not only is it hard to stay motivated, but it's super hard to practise partner work. There are usually several people at the same level looking to grade at the same time. Team up with them – come half an hour early to class and practise. Even if nobody at your current level is looking to grade, there are plenty of people who would welcome the opportunity to do additional training. We receive amazing instruction during class, but there is no chance that these classes alone will allow you to be as familiar with the syllabus as you need to be for a grading.

Food is really important, and there have been a few articles in previous editions of Kaze (e.g. April 2011) about nutrition during training. I was really hoping that training would provide me with an opportunity to eat more and not put on weight. Unfortunately, that wasn't the case. I found that I needed different types of food, but not necessarily more. I need protein and the types of carbs that keep me going for a long time (grainy bread, weetbix etc). However, everyone is different and, even with the best advice, it's something that you have to figure out for yourself. Treat these grading trainings as practise for the first "big one". Very few people will find the right combination of training, food, rest and work the first time. It takes a bit of tinkering. For my next grading, I'm going to eat more tuna and less chocolate.

It is important to include recovery days in your plan. While it might be tempting to train every day so that you are super prepared, you won't do yourself any favours. Most of us have a lot else





going on in life, and it's important not to neglect that. A couple of planned days off a week will give you the chance to recharge and allow you to approach every training session with enough energy. Quality definitely beats quantity. In addition to planning recovery days, it is also important that your plan is flexible. Training is hard work, mentally and physically, and even the most well constructed plans need some flexibility. If life is getting on top of you, or you feel exhausted, take a day off. It's far better to spend a day recovering than to drive yourself into the ground.

As we can see, being prepared for a grading is much more than merely attending the minimum number of classes and having the minimum period of time pass since our last grading. When we receive an invitation to grade, it is not necessarily an indication that our teachers think we are ready. It is our responsibility to decide whether or not we will be fully prepared and able to perform our best on grading day. We need to be honest with ourselves so we are confident in the grading and feel really proud when we earn our new rank. It's about consistently giving your best and establishing a plan that works for you. Remember **Osu! – persevere with patience**



*Here's an important parting message from Cath about grading day...*

I have a story which I have told very few people. My blue belt grading was super hard, probably because I was unfit and was so nervous and tense that every technique was exhausting. I was shattered after that grading, and somebody (I can't remember who, but probably wouldn't tell you anyway) told me to hold something in reserve for the end of the grading in future. Great advice, I thought. I vowed to do that next time. So the advanced blue grading rolled around, and I kept energy in reserve. As nobody except Jun Shihan knows what's going to happen in a grading, and every grading is different, there was no way for me to know when to let loose. As it turned out, the grading finished before I had a chance to really put some effort in. I was so



disappointed with myself after that grading, I felt like I didn't deserve the promotion. It still bothers me. So here's my biggest piece of advice: on the day itself, don't hold back! Show us how hard you've worked for this. Throw everything into it. We're only going to respect you even more if you fall over exhausted. And when it hurts, a big kiai will get you through.

**Osu! Cath Duthie and Amy McNabb, 1st kyu**



## Tournament 2013 – it's coming your way!

Tournaments have always been part of our Seido karate scene – to a lesser or greater degree. Some people love the opportunity to train hard with a goal in mind; others will try them out only with lots of encouragement, whereas some students really struggle with how the concept of competition fits with the tenets of the Seido philosophy. But think about the principles and values that we learn about and see demonstrated in the dojo every time we train – patience, obedience, respect, spirit, concentration, humility and much more. Tournaments are just another way of expressing these principles, albeit in a more pressured environment; and you can be guaranteed participation will expand your personal threshold.



But first; a bit of context around North Island tournaments to date. Back in 2005 Seido Wellington was approached by Karate NZ (affiliated to the World Karate Federation) to help with the Commonwealth Karate Championships – a pretty big event hosting competitors from all Commonwealth countries featuring many different karate styles. At short notice we answered the call and it was a fantastic opportunity to see world class karateka competing. That event highlighted some different concepts about running tournaments and we've since incorporated some of the learnings into how we now run our North Island tournaments.

In 2013 the tournament is going to be bigger and better than before – one action packed day culminating in a 'showcase spectacular' in the evening featuring black belt finalists and more... and a Sayonara brunch party on the Sunday to re-live the highlights and socialise with Seido friends from far and wide.

But really we can't continue to call them "North Island" tournaments any longer – they've become really popular with people travelling far and wide to attend them – which we're really happy about. And every year we've learnt about how to do things better with the aim of standardising what works really well – we've even documented our systems and processes so that each time it gets easier – well that's the theory.

So at this year's 2012 tournament all the Jun Shihans got together and decided it was time to



put all the learning to good use and establish a regular tournament slot on the Seido NZ calendar so.... the **Shihans' Invitational Tournament** was launched. Jun Shihan Ben was coerced, cajoled, bribed by his fellow Shihans to host the inaugural event for 2013; but seriously after that, we're hoping other dojos will step forward and support the Shihans to hold this event and keep the tournament energy alive.

And for 2013 the really exciting news is that Nidiame Akira Nakamura, on behalf of Kaicho, has agreed to attend all the way from New York – how cool is that!



We've also heard rumours that a certain Jun Shihan in Australia is preparing his team, we know that those mainlanders who wear red and black will be looking for serious action, those from the top of the south will bring sunshine for sure, the jet set from Auckland will be here in style, the King Country folk will organise the cows to be milked and arrive in their Toyotas but most of all we're really hoping to have people from around the dojos come and join in the fun – there'll be a special tournament website coming early next year with regular updates so be sure to keep checking in.

And... Brooklyn karateka – the core committee has planning well underway but early in the new year there will be a call for all hands to the pump – your dojo needs you to help make this a big success. Happy Christmas everyone – and hint to Santa, please bring me a new jo as I broke my other one.

Osu

Sensei Avis



## **2013, the year that will be...**

You'll need to keep checking the website and facebook pages for updates through the year, but keep an eye out for all of these events, on top of the regular gradings.

### **Dojo opens**

We fling the doors open on Monday 7 January with most classes starting that week. Some of the lunchtime classes won't start back till the following week and it's a limited children's programme until 28 January (except for the school holiday programme), so look at the website for info.

### **Monday night action**

Returns from 14 January, and there is an exciting line-up of classes and sessions planned for the year. The first couple of sessions are designed to do something about the excessive number of puddings you may have consumed over the summer break.

### **North Island camp**

First weekend in March. Dust off your sleeping bags now.

### **Wellington's 30th birthday**

The Wellington dojo celebrates its 30th anniversary this year, so we're celebrating that over the weekend of 23 March. This will most likely take the form of a training session and after-match function. Details coming.

### **Jun Shihans' Tournament**

This is the big event on the calendar for 2013. This one-day tournament will have visitors from around the world, including Nidaime. Our tournament website will go live early in 2013 and you'll be able to get all the info you need there.