

New Zealand Kyokushin Karate Ltd.
Official Branch of: IKO Matsushima



(Black-Belt Grading)

3 November 2007

Programme

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to this very special occasion for our organisation and thank you for supporting the two candidates as they attempt to earn the right to wear the envied Kyokushin Black Belt.

Our style of karate is renowned around the world as the “strongest karate” due to the physicality of the training and the full-contact nature of our tournament fighting. To achieve a Shodan (first degree black belt) is a significant achievement indeed.



The technical, emotional and physical demands of such a grading, coupled with the years of dedicated training needed before reaching this stage in a persons karate life means that relatively few students make it through to black-belt level.

By far, those who reach Shodan in our style are young, fit, strong men who enjoy the full-contact fighting and have relatively few distractions from the time-consuming training regime that is so necessary to achieve the level of competence needed to successfully complete the grading requirements.

What is quite amazing (and in my experience, very unique) in respect to today’s grading is that both candidates are women and both have reached an age that is well in advance of the average male grading participant. When you also consider that they are both mothers of 4 children – you cannot fail to be impressed by their dedication and commitment to reaching what to many is their ultimate martial arts goal.

I’m sure the family, friends, fellow karate-ka and other supporters who are here today will join me in wishing Bev-Anne and Lisa a successful grading.

OSU

Sensei Peter Jennings
Branch Chief
IKO Matsushima

CANDIDATES PROFILE

Name: **Lisa Heke-Baker**

Age: **34**

Occupation: **Mother
Teacher**

Commenced training:
Kyokushin - **1989**



Name: **Bev-Anne Jennings**

Age: **46**

Occupation: **Bank Manager
Mother**

Commenced Training:
Nam Wai Pai - **1995**
Kyokushin - **2000**



SHODAN SHINZA SYLLABUS

Essay

Completed prior to grading date (Copies attached)

Grading Commences

Instruction

Candidates to jointly:

- Conduct class warm-up
- Count basic (Kihon) techniques in set order.

Terminology

In addition to terminology required for basic class instruction, must be able to translate English/Japanese-

- All striking parts of hand and foot
- All Stances

Renraku Waza (Combination techniques)

10 combinations of own making –using variable strikes, kicks, blocks and stances

5 unrehearsed combinations to set by Sensei

Ippon Kumite (One-step sparring)

Own choice of blocks and retaliations against:

- 5 Chudan Tsuki
- 5 Judan Tsuki
- 5 Mae Geri

Sanbon Kumite (Three-step sparring)

10 combinations to be advised by Sensei

Kata (Patterns)

Taikyoku Sokogi Ich	Taikyoku Sokogi Ni	Taikyoku Sokogi San
Taikyoku Sokogi Yon	Taikyoku Ich Tate	Taikyoku Ni Tate
Taikyoku San Tate	Pinan Ich Ura	Pinan Ni Ura
Pinan San	Pinan Yon	Pinan Go
Yantsu	Gekisai Dai	Gekisai Sho
Tsuki No	Saiha	Seienchin
Tensho	Own Kata	

Stamina

Exercises to be determined by Sensei

Final Kata

Sanshin

10 Minute Break

Self Defence

Minimum of 15 defences against attack (including at least 1 weapon) – to be demonstrated with a partner as a continuous scenario.

Tameshiwari (Board breaking)

- 1 Te Waza (with hand)
- 1 Hiji Waza (with elbow)
- 1 Geri Waza (with kick)

Jiyu Kumite (Free fighting)

Minimum 15 maximum 25

Spirit Test

As determined by Sensei

Dojo Kun

Reciting of Kyokushin Oath

Grading Ends

CANDIDATES ESSAYS:

How Kyokushin Karate can benefit Women

Written by: **Lisa Heke-Baker**

To begin, I will briefly outline the nature of Kyokushin Karate, how it differs from other martial arts, and other forms of exercise or sport. I will then discuss some of the physical, psychological, and spiritual benefits that can be garnered, and conclude with my personal view on how these benefits impact on Women.

Kyokushin Karate is a stand-up, full contact martial art. The style was officially founded in 1964, by Masutatsu Oyama (however, he had opened his first dojo in 1953). With roots in both Shotokan and Goyu-ryu Karate (both of which use predominantly hard, as opposed to soft, techniques), it is no wonder that Kyokushin is considered one of the hardest external styles of martial art. Kyokushin places emphasis on practical application and rigorous training, with underlying philosophies of self improvement, self discipline, and strength of spirit.

Differing from many other exercise forms, or sports, which promote competition and winning; Kyokushin instead promotes self development and self control. It also teaches self defence, and includes ethical teachings that can be applied to life. Further separating Kyokushin from other exercise, or sport, is a degree of ceremony/tradition, and a meditative/spiritual component.

Let me first discuss the most obvious benefits, the physical ones. Regular Kyokushin Karate training will improve cardiovascular fitness, with roll-on affects of balancing blood pressure, circulation, and cholesterol levels. As a full-body workout, you can reasonably expect that Karate training will help burn body fat and improve muscle tone. Training includes a reasonable amount of stretching, which naturally, improves flexibility. Not only will this decrease the chance of injury through sprains etc, it will increase the ability to recover from injury, should it occur. Strength will increase from the calisthenics used in training, and co-ordination will improve. Continued practice of techniques will improve speed, and with strong emphasis on hard physical training, stamina will also improve. Because Kyokushin Karate focuses on practicality, it enables Women to learn techniques that allow a smaller person to use the physics of weight and motion to their advantage.

There are a number of psychological benefits for Women training in Kyokushin. Exhaustive training sessions often leave both body and mind completely relaxed. It is quite possible that regular training of this type helps reduce anxiety, and subsequently, may provide Women with an effective mechanism for coping with daily work and life stresses.

Many Kyokushin Karate students, or karateka (the Japanese word for a practitioner of Karate), regularly set short and long term goals. Whether it be to compete in a tournament, or striving for the ultimate prize of blackbelt, consistently training with determination and dedication to achieve these goals, aids in building self-esteem and confidence. Constantly setting and achieving goals reinforces positive change and enables the female student to maintain motivation and develop her self discipline.

These benefits often have a cross over effect in other areas of life, including career and relationships.

For a Woman, there is added psychological benefit in mastering self defence techniques, to the level of being able to defend oneself or avoid conflict. It instils a sense of self confidence and provides peace of mind. Benefit is gained in the friendships formed in the dojo. Karateka share common goals and experiences through training hard together, and strong bonds are formed through the constant motivating, supporting, and encouraging of each other during sessions.

In discussing spiritual benefits to Women training in Kyokushin, let me briefly revisit some of the philosophies of this particular martial art. Self control, respect for yourself and others, maintaining positive attitudes, and continual self improvement underpin Kyokushin Karate training. Further to this, Kyokushin provides avenues, through which, dedicated and determined karateka have achieved spiritual serenity and mental tranquility. Training builds character, encourages self discipline and self awareness, and teaches courage when facing challenges, both, in the dojo, and in life.

A good instructor teaches karateka to push beyond perceived limits of endurance, and to strive for greater heights in performance, which ultimately, cultivates a strength of spirit which can only be of enormous benefit. The spiritual side of Kyokushin Karate is not religious, but can induce a state of mind, which may enable students to overcome emotional blocks, fear, and anxiety. When focusing on techniques, through kata and other training forms, a concerted effort is made to unite mind, body, and spirit. Specific breathing exercises and periods of meditation further work to enhance the student's inner sense of well-being.

One final point to make. In reading this, you would be accurate in thinking that most of the physical, psychological, and spiritual benefits I have outlined, in regard to Women training in Kyokushin, might also apply to Men training in Kyokushin. However, it is pertinent to point out, that the world we live in is not equably aligned. Although Women continue to make considerable advances and Men, generally, accommodate these advances,

Men have always been, and remain to this day, the dominant sex. So, although the benefits of training in Kyokushin Karate are similar for both Men and Women, in my opinion, the benefits are greater, and have a more profound effect on Women, because they go some way to address inequality, both, in the dojo, and away from it. And because Kyokushin Karate encompasses all the physical, psychological, and spiritual benefits mentioned above, the playing field of life is levelled that little bit more for the Woman who chooses to follow "The way to the ultimate truth".

“My first 1000 days of Training”
by
Bev-Anne Jennings

“The Martial Way begins with one thousand days and is mastered after ten thousand days of training” Mas Oyama

Can a woman over 40, begin to train in Kyokushin, keep up with those younger students, manage an aging body that does not appreciate having to put legs and arms in particular stances! Conquer fears and work their way to attempt a shodan grading?

Absolutely, at least I am certainly going to give the goal of Black Belt the best that I can, and will do so in the knowledge that I am over 40, and my body may not be as subtle or as strong as when I was 20, however I am a Kyokushin student who is proud, committed, faithful and steadfast in the knowledge that I will go to the grading and give every inch of my strength both physically and mentally. That is just what we do!

So why is a 46 year old women training in a sport that most believe is for men and in a Karate style that is renowned for its tough training regime and ask of perfection from its students.

I first became aware of Karate as a young teenager when many of my classmates in our local high school started training in various Karate styles. I was also able to observe these classmates as it was common in those days for the different Karate styles to give demonstrations at local community events.

I recall watching a local Karate club demonstrate basic moves and kata at the opening of the Porirua Community Centre. I was very impressed with the competence of some of the students but also that there were females, although admittedly only a few amongst many young men. My fascination did not lead me to go along to this club as I was still very much a teenager and very conscious of my lack of eye hand coordination.

It was not until some 20 years later that I as a 35 year old mother of 4, decided to take hold of my fears and join a local Karate club. It is a bit embarrassing to add that I was (and continue to be) a fan of Dolph Lungren, whom I knew was a Kyokushin student. However given the circumstances at that time I ended up starting my Karate pathway with Nam Wai Pai, a style similar to Tae Kwon Do but with a bit more physicality, and included light contact whilst sparring.

I loved the training atmosphere from the first night; even though, I was pretty bad, trying to complete basic moves was a total disaster. I remember my first training night being the only woman, amongst a room full of males and the presence of the instructor, Patrick Cassidy. Patrick was pivotal in giving me the self confidence to grow and I am grateful for his patience that eventually led me to achieving my Brown Belt which I am extremely proud of to this day.

My personal life took a challenging turn and I was unable to continue training. I am a great believer in the saying that as one door closes another opens and this was the case when I was lucky enough to meet my current Instructor Sensei Peter Jennings.

I began training with Sensei Peter in 2000; again I have been blessed with another Instructor who does not judge me for what I can't do but encourages me for what I can.

It is discomfoting to realise that seven years have gone past and I am not sure that I can honestly say that I have been the ideal student over that time. For me personally the past seven years have in the words of Shakespeare 'been the best of times and the worst of times'

The death of a close Karate friend affected me emotionally more than I have admitted to myself, along with the downward spiral of one of my children that became addicted to hard drugs. Training became a bit too hard for a short period of time as I tried to find the courage to deal with things I could not change.

I was shocked back into reality when I discovered that I had contracted Lupus, which is an autoimmune disease that can be controlled but not treated. At 45 years old I was faced with a daunting thought that I might not be long for this world and that if that was the case then I wanted to ensure that I made the most of what life had to offer.

And so it was back to training, and again like a beginner back with gusto...except this time there was the dream and the goal to have that coveted Black Belt. Mas Oyama stated that the step from Brown Belt to Black Belt was the most important in the life of a Karate-ka. I can now appreciate how true those words of wisdom have turned out to be.

On my first day in the dojo, my dream was not at all about getting a black belt; I simply wanted to get fit and to improve my coordination. Even moving through the grades, a shodan grading seemed years away, and to be truthful to myself I had not entertained the idea that I could have the ability to be able to succeed.

For me a moment of truth has been thrust into my life. So here I am, 46 years old, training like I am 36 years old, managing the frustrating lupus whose major symptom is chronic fatigue, and trying to remain focused and alert at each training session.

When Sensei Peter, announced that Lisa Baker and myself would be grading in November, I went into silent panic mode. The first words that I thought were 'I am not worthy" whether that is just my nature being a person who looks at the cup half empty and not half full, I am not sure. I was terrified, perhaps because the Black Belt is an acknowledgement that you have completed the necessary training and attained the required standard, and that you, if successful are able to start the journey to be even better.

I knew from that day that I would have to work harder than I ever have, train harder and listen harder (for those that know me not an easy task), I would need to be prepared, not just physically but mentally.

I owe a huge amount to the dedication and support of Lisa Baker, my training partner and fellow Black Belt prospect. Lisa is always encouraging, never complains when we have to keep doing a move over and over because I keep forgetting, or when I have a mind blank mid way through kata!. The best thing about training has been being able to have someone else just as committed and whom you know will be there with you on the day.

The past 6 months have been gruelling but also exhilarating. The word, 'Panic" springs to mind, as I realise that there is only a few days to go before the grading, and that the moment of truth has finally arrived.

I may be 46 in years but I feel sure that I am not that in the manner that I train or in how I view life. My sense of pride and strength in relation to Karate, can only be attributed to my Sensei Peter Jennings, who continues to be an inspiration, he is a dedicated instructor who is always supportive and willing to give of his expertise, time and knowledge.

In summary, I can confidently say that Karate at 40 plus adds value to your life and not only around the fitness, self defence aspect, but the camaraderie amongst fellow students, a sense of belonging to the wider Karate family and the love for the style of Kyokushin. It is also prudent to remember that 'All things are difficult before they are easy'.

Osu!

Jinsei nana korobi, ya oki
Such is life – seven times down, eight times up