



*New Zealand
Kyokushin Karate Ltd.*

Affiliated to IKO Matsushima

KURO OBI SHINZA

(Black-Belt Grading)

16 February 2014 – St Bernard's College
Lower Hutt – 10am -2pm

Programme

(plus Candidate Grading Essays)

WELCOME

Welcome to this very special occasion for our organisation and particular thanks to those instructors and students from other Dojo's who have joined our own in 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.

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

OSU

Shihan Peter Jennings
Branch Chief
IKO Matsushima



SHODAN CANDIDATES PROFILE

Name: **Lawrence Ritchie**

Age: 39

Commenced training:
Kyokushin - 1989

律真 隆



Name: Mitchell Horwell

Age: 17

Commenced Training:
Kyokushin - 2008

律真 隆

SHODAN SHINZA PROGRAMME

Grading Officials:

Branch Chief (Examiner)

Shihan Peter Jennings

Grading Sensei (Co-ordinator)

Sensei Ron Discombe

Facilitating Sempai (Assistants)

Sempai Bev-Anne Jennings

Sempai Lisa Heke-Baker

Sempai Lucho Arca

Kumite Sempai (Fighting Co-ordinator)

Sempai Jim Jennings

Pre-grading day requirements

Essay

Copies attached

Class Instruction

The candidates have already demonstrated their ability to competently:

- Start and finish sessions (including reciting Dojo Kun).
- Take class warm-up
- Demonstrate, and count basic (Kihon) techniques in prescribed order.
- Describe, perform and correct medium level (up to 3 technique combination) Ido Geiko.
- Take class through Taikyoku and Pinan kata – making corrections to students' stance and technique as appropriate.

Grading Day Requirements

Strength/Stamina

Exercises in accordance with IKO Matsushima senior dan-grade requirements

Ido Geiko (Moving basics)

10 combinations –using variable basic strikes, kicks, blocks in formal stances - to be advised during grading

Renraku (Combinations)

10 combinations of own making (from fighting position)

Ippon (one-step) Kumite

Own choice of blocks and retaliations against:

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

Sanbon (three-step) Kumite

10 combinations to be advised during grading

Kata (Patterns)

Taikyoku Sokogi Ichi - Yon	Gekisai Sho
Taikyoku Ich- San (incl. Tate and Ura)	Saiha
Juji Kata	Seishin
Pinan Ichi-Ni (Ura & Tate)	Seipai
Pinan San-Go	Chion
Yantsu	Own Kata
Tsuki No	Sanshin-Tensho
Gekisai Dai	Pinan Ni (Blind-folded)

10 Minute Break

Tameshiwari (Board Breaking)

- 1 Seiken Waza (Punch)
- 1 Shuto Waza (Knife hand)
- 1 Hiji Waza (Elbow)
- 1 Geri Waza (Kick)

Self Defence

Defences against multiple attacks (including at least 1 weapon) – to be demonstrated as a continuous scenario.

10 Minute Break

Jiyu Kumite (Free fighting)

40 x 1½ minute duration.

Spirit Test

As advised at grading

Grading Ends

Becoming Jackie Chan – Mitchell Horwell

I began karate at age 12 in year 7, fresh out of year 6 at primary school and starting into a big school I was looking for a new sport to do. I thought “what do all my idols have in common”. I started going through a list in my head Batman, rich, handsome, cool gadgets, and expert at martial arts. Goku from Dragon ball Z, Super powered, practically a god, expert at martial arts. Jackie Chan, Funny, a famous actor, expert at martial arts and finally Spongebob Squarepants, Fry cook, funny, friendly and (sort of)expert at martial arts. Obviously the similarities between all of these was martial arts so if I was going to be cool and internationally recognised like them, martial arts was going to be the way to get there. I was going to become the next Jackie Chan... or Spongebob.

So I told mum that I wanted to get into some kind of martial arts. There were the obvious choices, Judo, Tae Kwon Do, Kempo. After searching for many different styles that were in the area mum and I found a style that neither of us had ever heard about before called Kyokushin karate that was happening very close by at Raroa Intermediate. I went along to the next session which took place on Tuesday, I was very excited. Back then the class was very small with less than 10 students. Just from watching for the first time I was hooked in by what they were doing and how Shihan Peter (or Sensei back then) was teaching the students and I knew next time I definitely wanted to join in.

I joined in on the next session. I don't remember too much of my first session but I do remember being very, very overwhelmed and confused on what I was doing and was struggling to keep up at the pace that the new techniques were being done which put me off at first, but I was very glad that I decided to keep at it. As the sessions went on I remember learning how to make a fist, how to do an effective punch, the first kata, next thing I know I'm preparing for my first grading.

I remember being very nervous throughout the weeks leading up to my grading. The grading wasn't as difficult as I originally thought it was going to be and I was able to grade to a 7th kyu blue belt.

From then I graded to a 5th kyu yellow belt. The following year I was up for another grading to 4th kyu. This grading was very difficult for me to get through as the fighting was much tougher than any other previous fights I had to do and I was struggling to get through the last few fights. I remember barely being able to pass the spirit test at the end of the grading. Despite this I was able to grade up to a 4th kyu green belt.

I was at college in the next year and I was able to join in with the senior sessions, although very tentative at first because from watching I could tell that the senior sessions were much, much tougher than anything I had ever done in the junior sessions, I started to slowly join one session a week until I felt more confident.

The senior sessions have definitely toughened me up for my gradings and I'm glad I was pushed to get through my fear of the physical side to join in.

I was very afraid of taking part in any full contact fighting in the tournaments that I had entered. I was very small for my age being 14 and less than 45kg it was very hard to motivate myself to try fighting in a tournament because I knew that everybody else would be much bigger than me, but Shihan told me I had to take part in a tournament before my next grading. Begrudgingly I entered the upcoming competition in the 13 – 14 year old full contact division. There were only 3 fighters (including me) in the division so we were close to the last set of fights.

The first fight was Sam Baxter from our club against a white belt from up north. Sam unfortunately lost but he was given the bronze. Then it was my turn to fight the white belt from up north. My opponent was around my size which was very lucky for me. The fight went very well and I ended up winning the fight and getting gold at my tournament. However unlike many other kids my age I haven't gotten too much bigger than I was when I was 14 and I haven't entered very many full contact fighting since then only in non-contact and kata.

I was able to grade up to 3rd kyu in the following grading but my next 2 gradings would be the most difficult I've had to do so far. I had to learn lots of new katas, do many more fights, break boards, devise a self-defence routine and take the class through basics and some kata. The gradings lasted 2 sessions instead of one. I was able to achieve both of these gradings and became a 1st kyu at 15.

Now that I'm a 1st kyu I have much, much more responsibility over teaching the new students that we seem to get every week. With over 50 young and enthusiastic kids it is very difficult to keep them on task a lot of the time but I enjoy teaching very much. Karate has benefitted me greatly in many different ways.

I am definitely fitter than I would have been without karate especially (from the senior sessions and the Sunday sessions at Shihans') my leadership abilities have definitely improved helping me become a peer supporter for the new year 9s' at my school this year. I have become more patient through working with the little kids who are easily distracted when I'm trying to teach and I have become more disciplined in my school life and in other sports I have taken part in.

And that brings us to today, the most important and most difficult event of my karate life. Thank you to everybody who has been a part of this long journey of mine and motivated me to do better every session and I hope to make everybody proud after this test of everything I have learnt over the past 6 years.

Kyokushin: the only constant is change – Lawrence Ritchie

I believe in tradition. Keep on doing what works. But this doesn't mean one can't improve on tradition – just don't throw it away completely. That's what Kyokushin karate's founder did. Mas Oyama devised Kyokushin by building on the more traditional forms of karate he had learnt. He added his own ideas as well as those from other fighting arts. He continued to refine his art right up until his untimely death in 1994.

When formally established in the 1960s, Kyokushin karate was a far cry from what it has since become. In the early days, punching to the head was commonplace and, according to one of Mas Oyama's first Western proponents, Jon Bluming, there weren't any thigh kicks. The latter might surprise some, as it's now considered one of Kyokushin's signature moves (despite its purported origin in Thai boxing).

When Mas Oyama died in 1994, the organisation splintered off into a number of separate organisations. Twenty years later, their individual training methodologies, kata and techniques vary. For example, the Matsushima group has introduced new kata such as the 'tate' kata with a vertical focus. Meanwhile, the Matsui group has brought back the 'teki' kata with its primarily horizontal movements.

Sometimes it would seem there are as many right ways to do karate as there are instructors. Let's take the kata, for example. Some instructors do them the old way, and some do them the new way. Others forget how to do them and unwittingly take creative licence. When the instructors meet together, the highest ranking instructor's view takes precedence. Some may disagree regardless but out of respect, remain silent on the matter. This explains why in a kata competition the same kata is scored a 10 by one instructor and a measly 6 by another. Imagine taking a fifteen year break, and then coming back to see where things are at. That's what I did.

In 1989, I was fourteen years old. A friend dragged me along to a new karate club that was opening in Cannons Creek. The instructor was a towering Niuean by the name of (Sempai) Hale 'Harry' Pahetogia. His enthusiasm for karate was infectious, so I signed up. The classes were very physical, and we got fit fast. I kept training there until I left home to go flatting in Wellington city. I joined the Marist club in Tasman Street, headed by (then Sempai) Peter Jennings. Things were different at Marist, and I had to adjust. At the time, about seven instructors took turns running the classes, and I learnt something unique from each of them.

In 1996, while sparring, somebody jumped on my ingrown toenail and sent bloody flying. I stopped training after that. My mind turned to other things, and I thought my training days were over for good.

Fast forward to May 2011. I spotted an advertisement Sempai Hale had put in the local paper. He was looking for new students. This inspired me join up again. Sempai Hale's dojo had moved across the road from the old one, and he now had three other instructors assisting him.

The first six months back were hard. I had forgotten all of the kata except the first two, had lost coordination, and needed to harden up again. Well, I expected all of this, but what I didn't expect was to have to unlearn what I knew was right. I was doing it the old way, and some instructors were doing it the new way. They corrected me over and over, and it was maddening. Kyokushin had changed a little.

The following year, my wife started studying on Wednesdays, and I had to look after the kids. Training once a week isn't enough though, so I had no choice but to find another club again. Marist was the logical choice. Full circle. I knew it was a different affiliation, but this didn't bother me. To me it was about the training. But things had changed there too. I had a lot of catching up to do.

On the first night, Shihan Jennings was there taking the juniors class. I looked around for other familiar faces, but didn't find any. The students had grown in number and there were a few assistant instructors, one of whom was Shihan's wife Sempai Bev-Anne. During the break, I greeted Shihan, and he said he remembered me. The first class felt like a test. We did a bit of everything. I suppose Shihan wanted to know how I measured up after all these years.

Completely dedicated to his cause, Shihan personally shows up to every class. He not only instructs but trains with us too. No two classes are the same, and he's always teaching us new things. We all aspire to reach the same high standard he has set for himself.

Kyokushin karate, in all its renditions, is now as strong as ever. It has survived the sands of time. In a similar vein, let's embrace what life presents to us, and we won't be left behind. Let's choose a pursuit that makes us feel alive, and pour our hearts and souls into it. I choose karate.

Osu