



# ZUSHI KAISEI TIMES

Special Edition

February 2016

## Sailing provides lessons for life



KAZUMI IGAWA PHOTO

Students of Zushi Kaisei Junior High School practice sailing small dinghies in Zushi Bay in front of the school.

As a main core of “marine education,” Zushi Kaisei Junior High School provides its students with practical training in sailing in Zushi Bay, which spreads out into the distance in front of the boys school campus.

All students at the junior high school must participate in the training twice a year, in yachts they build themselves in the final six months of the first grade.

Their yachts, called the Optimist, are small, single-handed, wooden sailing dinghies, which are intended for use by children up to the age of 15. The Opti-

mist is 2.31 meters long, 1.13 meters wide and weighs 35 kg. Its mast is 2.26 meters high.

According to Shinichi Uchida, a teacher in charge of technical course and manager of the school’s yacht club, the Optimist is the smallest yacht of all and is the best sailboat for beginners experiencing sailing for the first time.

Uchida, a graduate of Zushi Kaisei, said, “We believe that through learning to sail, students can acquire the ability to cooperate with friends, build a sense of responsibility and mas-

ter how to act alone on the sea without relying on others’ help. It helps them to develop self-reliance and personal responsibility.”

Uchida also said that the school’s seventh-graders build the sailboats in groups. “These days, students have less chance to make things themselves, compared to the students of past generations. So it is a good chance to build the sailboats and sail them,” he said.

He warned, however, that sailing is different from an amusement park ride and safety can

never be guaranteed 100 percent.

“So, we have to concentrate and prepare for the worst during training. When problems occur, people tend to seek help from others, but students can learn through the practices how to prevent problems from happening,” he said.

In the long history of the school, which observed its centennial in 2003, there was a tragic accident that claimed the lives of 11 students of the school and an elementary school pupil, who

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## Molding ‘complete’ graduates is school goal

*Jun Takahashi, principal of Zushi Kaisei Junior & Senior High School, in an interview with staff writers of the Zushi Kaisei Times, explains the school’s approach to education and its major features.*

**Question:** What is the education philosophy of Zushi Kaisei?

**Answer:** Zushi Kaisei’s education has its roots in the naming of the school “Kaisei.” The word “Kaisei” comes from “Yi-ching,” or the “Book of Changes,” an ancient divination text and the oldest of classic Chinese

books, originally written some 3,000 years ago. It means we must look for truth, set our goals and achieve them. You should not only study but also strengthen the mind and the body so that you can decide what you want to do in the future. Ultimately, we expect our students to grow and develop as well-balanced human beings.

**Q:** What are the main features of Zushi Kaisei?

**A:** The most remarkable feature of Zushi Kaisei Junior and Senior High School is that it is

so close to the sea. The school is less than one minute from the sea. By using the advantages of its location, our school puts emphasis on education related to the ocean, or what we call “marine education.” Through marine education, Zushi Kaisei students will learn how to solve various problems. Zushi Kaisei has also been promoting overseas study programs for over 30 years to increase the opportunities for our students to experience life outside Japan. We are now carrying out the programs



ZUSHI KAISEI PHOTO

Principal Jun Takahashi

with New Zealand, Canada, the United States, South Korea and some other countries. In addition to regular classes, we provide some unique co-curricular activities, such as “education

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## MARINE EDUCATION



Third-graders at Zushi Kaisei Junior High School take part in a long-distance open-water swim in Zushi Bay as part of the school's "marine education." All the participating students complete the challenge (in the photo below).

# 1.5-km swim strengthens minds, bodies

All third-graders at Zushi Kaisei Junior High School take part in a long-distance, open-water swim each July. Every student, good and bad swimmers alike, is trained since entering the school to take on the 1.5-kilometer challenge in Zushi Bay.

In an interview with the Zushi Kaisei Times, Naoki Osawa, a P.E. teacher, talks about the purpose of the long-distance swim, one of the school's most famous events.

**Question: Why did Zushi Kaisei start the long-distance swim?**

**Answer:** About 30 years ago,

Kenji Takahashi, a P.E. teacher, suggested it to his colleagues. Zushi Kaisei is close to the sea and Zushi Bay is suitable for long-distance swimming. He thought that the program would help strengthen the minds and the bodies of his students.

**Q: How do teachers prepare for this annual event?**

**A:** Ensuring the safety of the participating students is our top priority. We mobilize as many rescue staff as swimmers. And we are well prepared to deal with any health problems after the swim, while allowing them to enjoy a sense of achievement.

It is also necessary to take precautions against a possible earthquake and resultant tsunami by carrying out drills, and making sure that everyone knows how to evacuate safely in case of an emergency.

**Q: Do teachers train for the long-distance swim?**

**A:** Yes, we do. We do some kinds of training to improve our own swimming ability, to learn how to guide students, to conduct rescue drills and we practice using a rescue boat. We also take lessons from professional lifeguards.

**Q: How do you deal with students who cannot swim?**

**A:** First of all, we thoroughly teach them how to use their legs when swimming breaststroke. It is important to make them aware of how they are moving their bodies in the water. We also put emphasis on how long they can swim, not on how fast they can swim.

**Q: Are there any conditions that must be met to conduct the event?**

**A:** The sum of the numerical values of water temperature and air temperature must be over 50. The sea should be as calm as possible. And we have a certain criteria about the height of the waves and the strength of the wind.

## Molding 'complete' graduates

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through films" and "information technology," which will help our students in the future.

**Q: What is the origin of the Zushi Kaisei emblem?**

**A:** The symbol of Zushi Kaisei Junior and Senior High School is made up of a pen, a sword and a petal of sakura (cherry blossom), the national flower of Japan. Zushi Kaisei High School was established in 1903, the 36th year of the Meiji Era, as a branch school of a famous private school in Tokyo, called Kaisei High School, whose symbol is composed of a pen and a sword. Our school's emblem inherited their symbol — "the pen and the sword" — and added a sakura petal in the center. The design of the "pen

and the sword" came from the famous words of Edward Bulwer-Lytton, an English novelist, poet and politician (1803-1873): "The pen is mightier than the sword."

**Q: What do you expect from Zushi Kaisei students?**

**A:** Of course, it is important to pass on as much knowledge as we can to our students, but at the same time, it is also important to let students have various experiences. To this end, I expect the students to learn by themselves and I want to give them more opportunities to interact with the world. It is my hope that our students will visit many foreign countries, work internationally and contribute to the world when they have finished their education.



ZUSHI KAISEI PHOTOS

## Sailing provides life lessons

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drowned when their boat capsized on their way to Enoshima Island off Shichirigahama Beach near Kamakura, Kanagawa Prefecture, in January 1910.

People may wonder why

Zushi Kaisei continues to provide sailing training to its students after such a terrible accident.

Uchida said, "This school has the spirit not to be beaten by such a sad incident."



SCHOOL FESTIVAL



Students of Zushi Kaisei Junior & Senior High School carry portable shrines, called “mikoshi,” at the Kaisei Festival held toward the end of October every year.

KAZUMI IGAWA PHOTO

Kaisei Festival climaxes with ‘mikoshi’ parade

The Kaisei Festival is held at Zushi Kaisei Junior & Senior High School toward the end of October every year.

Some 5,000 to 8,000 people visit the festival, which features presentations of each school club’s activities, workshops by each grade, music performances and various other programs.

For example, junior high school third-graders exhibited the results of their research activities on the theme of “marine education” at the festival in 2015.

But the most popular and exciting part of the festival comes

at the close of the two-day event: the carrying of portable or miniature shrines, called “mikoshi,” in the schoolyard.

All junior high school third-graders and senior high school second-graders take part. Stripped to the waist, the boys are divided into eight groups. Each group is made up of 70 to 80 students and carries the wooden frames upon which the portable shrines or other objects are placed.

Upon the four frames for the senior high school boys are handmade portable shrines. But piled on each of the four frames



ZUSHI KAISEI PHOTO

for the junior high students are eight sake barrels, instead of portable shrines. In addition to the sake barrels, the students draw on wooden boards the pictures of a mountain, a storm, thunder and flames, respectively.

Two boys mount each of the frames to serve as “voice chair-

men” while the students move around the playground twice, carrying the heavy frames and making the campus reverberate with their loud chanting.

Every year, the parade of the portable shrines comes as a thrilling climax to the Kaisei Festival.

Survey reveals student likes, dislikes

The Zushi Kaisei Times carried out a survey of some 260 third-grade students at Zushi Kaisei Junior High School to find out what they think about the school, studying and their hobbies. The findings of the questionnaire follow:

- Q1:** Which subject do you like best, math, English or Japanese?  
**Answer:** Math 79 / English 35 / Japanese 29 / no preference / 105
- Q2:** What is your favorite Ghibli animation movie?  
**Answer:** 1st “My Neighbor Totoro (Tonari no Totoro)” / 123  
2nd “Laputa: Castle in the Sky (Tenku no Shiro Rapyuta)” / 81  
3rd “Spirited Away (Sen to Chihiro no Kamikakushi)” / 50  
(Single answer per respondent in a multiple-choice format)
- Q3:** Have you heard of the “All Blacks” (New Zealand’s national men’s rugby union team, officially nicknamed the All Blacks)?  
**Answer:** Yes 141 / No 157

- Q4:** What are the attractions of Zushi Kaisei Junior and Senior High School?  
**Answer:** A relatively large number of respondents cited “Located so close to the sea,” “Being a boys school” and “Sense of openness, shown by the absence of fences surrounding the campus”
- Q5:** What is your favorite kanji?  
**Answer:** A relatively large number of respondents cited the following five kanji characters  
“Raku” 楽 (easy, enjoyable, comfort)  
“Do” 努 (to make efforts, work hard)  
“Kyu” 休 (rest, break)  
“Ichi” 一 (first / top, No.1)  
“Kami” 神 (god, deity )
- Q6:** Which marine sports at Zushi Kaisei do you like better — long-distance swimming or sailing?  
**Answer:** Long-distance swimming / 64 / sailing / 207
- Q7:** Do you have a teacher whom you look up to?  
**Answer:** Yes 141 / No 157

ZUSHI KAISEI TIMES

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## ZUSHI CITY



ZUSHI CITY OFFICE PHOTO

**A huge crowd of spectators watch the fireworks at an annual show on Zushi Beach, one of Japan's largest seaside pyrotechnic shows.**

### Fireworks spectacular lights up Zushi Beach

A large-scale fireworks display is held at Zushi Beach in late May or early June every year as the largest tourist event in Zushi City.

At the fireworks festival May 29, 2015, nearly 7,500 fireworks were launched from a ship off the beach, drawing a turnout of 85,000 spectators. This compares to about 2,500 fireworks launched at another fireworks display at a beach in a nearby city.

The Zushi event is one of Japan's largest seaside fireworks

shows. It costs the city some ¥50 million.

In addition to the large number of fireworks launched, the Zushi show features what are called "messenger fireworks." Anyone can have his or her message, up to 20 words, read out by the MC (master of ceremonies) just prior to the launch of up to 10 fireworks. One message costs ¥10,000. Many messages are words of thanks to families and friends.

About 100,000 people watch

the display every year, with many of them coming from outside of Zushi City. The number of spectators well exceeds the 60,000 population of Zushi City. According to the Zushi City Office, the annual event is held on a weekday, not on a holiday or over the weekend, so as to reduce the number of outside visitors for safety reasons.

"Our top priority is to keep the spectators at the fireworks show safe," said a city official in charge of the event.

### There's so much in store on Zushi Ginza



ICHIRO TAKAKUWA PHOTO

**A 70-year-old toy shop on the Zushi Ginza shopping street**

The Zushi Ginza shopping street, which stretches from JR Zushi Station to the campus of Zushi Kaisei Junior & Senior High School, has a long history dating back to 1951.

On both sides of the street there are as many as 132 mom and pop shops, stores, clinics and other businesses, which are divided into five blocks. There's a sushi bar, a fishing shop, a Hawaiian imports retail shop, restaurants offering various cuisines, from Japanese and Chinese to Italian and French, banks and prep schools, among others.

A toy shop named "Nonki-ya" is the oldest with a 70-year history while a clock shop and a meat shop were opened around the same time. Over time, about half of the shops and stores on the street have changed. For instance, what used to be a public bathhouse is currently a parking lot.

### Zushi Kaisei's 800-year-old neighbors

Zushi Kaisei is situated in a quiet residential area in the southern part of Zushi City, a small city by the Pacific Ocean in Kanagawa Prefecture, some 45 kilometers southwest of Tokyo.

Zushi is close to the city of Kamakura, an ancient capital of Japan under the first samurai government in the Kamakura Period (1185-1333). There are a number of historic sites in Zushi, which are closely related to samurai and the Kamakura Period.

One of them is the grave of Taira no Rokudai. Rokudai was heir to the Heike samurai clan, but the Heike was destroyed by the rival Minamoto clan, also called "Genji," in a major sea battle in 1185. Rokudai was arrested and became a Buddhist priest. But he was eventually captured by the new samurai government under Genji and murdered on the banks of the Tago River. He was 26

This river, which runs through the center of Zushi City, is also known as the site where four children, aged 3 to 9, of Taneyoshi Miura, a local samurai leader, were executed after the father killed himself in a failed revolt in 1221 against the Minamoto government.



KATSUKI OTSUKA PHOTO

**Kamegaoka Hachimangu Shrine, a symbol of Zushi people's worship**

### Ghostly goings-on in 'haunted' tunnel

A nondescript road tunnel near Zushi Kaisei Junior & Senior High School is said to be one of the weirdest spots in Japan.

Many people have posted on the Internet their frightening or unearthly experiences in Kotsubo Tunnel. For example, one man reported, "When I was driving around the area, I suddenly noticed an unknown woman sitting next to me." Another man said, "I found the ghost of a man in a picture I took of my friends in the tunnel."

It remains a mystery why the tunnel is rumored to be haunted. One reason may be a private crematorium near the tunnel. This facility and the rumors of ghosts were described in the



ATSUYA WAKAHARA PHOTO

**Kotsubo Tunnel is rumored to be haunted.**

novel "Mugon" written in 1953 by Yasunari Kawabata, winner of the 1968 Nobel Prize for Literature.

Despite its reputation as the site of "psychic phenomenon," traffic in the area has increased recently as the road is indispensable to the local community, with more than 600 cars an hour passing through the tunnel.