

Shito-ryu Karate-do Kofukan

Dan Grading Examination Guide

Thank you for applying for your Dan Grading Examination. Please complete the attached form and send it back to me with the appropriate fee.

This paper has been prepared as guidance for you so that you will be well prepared on the day of examination, increasing your chances of passing.

K. Tomiyama

Dan Grading Syllabus

Please make sure you know what is required for the grade you are attempting. You will be asked to perform all or part of your requirement in any order. So, you must be well prepared.

- Shodan** Kata - 1) "Pin'an Shodan - Godan"
 2) "Bassai Dai" "Seienchin" "Matsukaze"
Hokei Kumite - "Pin'an Shodan - Godan"
Jiyu Kumite
- Nidan** Kata - 1) "Sanchin" "Tensho" "Naihanchin Shodan"
 2) "Kosokun Dai" "Seisan" "Annanko"
Pin'an Kumite Shodan - Godan
Jiyu Kumite
- Sandan** Kata - 1) "Bassai Dai" "Seienchin" "Matsukaze"
 2) "Jion" "Seipai" "Koshiki Rohai" "Niseishi"
Pin'an Bunkai Kumite No.1 – No.9
Jiyu Kumite
- Yondan** Kata - 1) "Kosokun Dai" "Seisan" "Annanko"
 2) "Chinto" "Kururunfa" "Unshu"
Jiyu Kumite
Kobudo - "Shushi-no-Kon"
- Godan** Kata - 1) "Jion" "Seipai" "Koshiki Rohai" "Niseishi"
 2) "Useishi" "Suparinpai" "Nipapo"
Jiyu Kumite
Kobudo - One choice from; "Sakugawa-no-Kon"
 "Tsukenshitahaku-no-Sai" "Hamahiga-no-Tonfa"
- Rokudan & above**
Kata - 1 Jiyu Kata (free choice)
Examination of candidate's personality, qualities of leadership and depth of knowledge.

Kata Performance

In assessing the performance of a Kata, the following criteria will be adopted:

- a. The Kata must be performed with competence and must demonstrate a clear understanding of the principles it contains giving regard to the characteristics of the group it belongs to.

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- b. The Kata performance must demonstrate correct focus of attention (*Chakugan* or *Metsuke*), use of power, good balance and proper breathing.
- c. The performance will also be evaluated with a view to discerning other points as shown below. A candidate is disqualified if he/she interrupts or varies the Kata.
Other criteria include:
 - 1. **Good demonstration of Kime which is a combination of power, speed and fixation, as well as timing.**
 - 2. **Consistency and correctness of stances.**
 - a. **Correct weight distribution**
 - b. **Smooth and even transition between stances (Hara or Tanden remaining 'weighted down' without up and down movement)**
 - c. **Correct fixation in stance**
 - d. **Heels and feet edges firmly on floor unless stance requires otherwise; i.e. front heel of Nekoashi-dachi etc.**
 - 3. **Correct posture.**
Although there are occasional exceptions, the torso must be kept upright with a straight neck and back. Shoulders should be kept low and relaxed.
 - 4. **Techniques demonstrate:**
 - a. **Accuracy**
 - b. **Correct and consistent Kihon (basics)**
 - c. **No unnecessary movement but with necessary movement**
 - d. **No unnecessary force but with necessary force**
 - e. **Whole body involvement which does not necessarily mean that whole body should move**
 - f. **Proper understanding of the Kata Bunkai**
 - 5. **Pace and rhythm**
 - a. **Short pause between combinations**
 - b. **Longer pause after Kiai**
 - c. **Contrast in height and length of stances**
 - d. **Contrast in fast and slow movements**
 - e. **Contrast in expansion and contraction of the body (without exaggeration)**
 - f. **Movement started from the previous position**
- 4. **Kata uniformly demonstrates:**
 - a. **Unwavering concentration, focus and spirit**
 - b. **Imagination of opponents and situations**
 - c. **A realistic, rather than 'theatrical' demonstration of the Kata's meaning.**
- d. For up to 3rd Dans, I would like to see a neat and sharp performance with plenty of spirit. For 4th Dans and above, although it should still be neat and sharp, I would like to see a certain degree of dignity and feeling in the performance. In other words, I would like to see some mental aspects added to technical aspects for the higher grades.

Hokei Kumite, Pin'an Kumite & Pin'an Bunkai Kumite

These sets are semi-formal exercise. So, you have to demonstrate correct stances and techniques as well as correct distancing (*Ma-ai*) and timing (*Ma*), performed with strong spirit and total concentration.

Also, each set has its own theme or principle to work on.

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Hokei Kumite

Shodan (Body angle and position)

You should clearly demonstrate the use of different body angles such as *Shomen*(square), *Hanmi*(quarter facing) and *Ma-hanmi*(side facing), as well as *Irimi*(entering body) position on the last technique.

Nidan (*Tenshin* - change angle)

You have to move into an angled position on the last technique.

Sandan (*Hanmi Nekoashi-dachi* - quarter facing cat stance)

You have to use the dropping and turning of the body into quarter facing cat stance to perform the last technique.

Yondan (*Tenshin Irimi*)

You have to move into an angled position as well as *Irimi* position to perform the last technique.

Godan (*Kirikaeshi* - sharp turning and turning back of the body)

You have to make good *Kokutsu-dachi* (back stance) and *Nekoashi-dachi* (cat stance) resulting in a sharp turning and turning back of the body.

Pin'an Kumite

Shodan (*Gyaku-hanmi* - reverse quarter facing position)

You must make sure that you turn your body properly into *Gyaku-Hanmi* position as well as closing the groin when you do *Yoko-uke* block. Also, you have to pull the opponent towards you when hitting with *Age-uke* movement.

Nidan (*Ashi-sabaki* - foot work)

Throw the opponent using correct steps and turning of the body.

Sandan You have to put the opponent off balance to perform these techniques.

Yondan (*Kirikaeshi* - sharp turning and turning back of the body, *Taiotoshi* throw)

Like Hokei Kumite Godan, you have to turn your body sharply into *Kokutsu-dachi* (back stance) then turn back into *Moto-dachi*. Also, you must make sure that the last throw is *Taiotoshi* (body drop), not a hip or leg throw.

Godan There are many stances and body angles involved in this set. You must make each stance and body position correct so that you demonstrate clear contrasts of heights and angles. Also, you must roll your arms and keep controlling the opponent's arm after *Jodan Kosa-uke* block.

Pin'an Bunkai Kumite

Each set has five stages; "defence", "initial counter", "take down", "immobilization" and "finishing off". You have to clearly demonstrate each stage.

Kobudo

Criteria for Kobudo Katas are almost the same as ordinary Katas. But, you must also show a good degree of familiarity and expertise in handling the weapon concerned, including the proper way of holding and gripping.

Jiyu Kumite (free sparring)

What we would like to see is spirited yet clean fights with good control, etiquette and manner, reflecting our moral principles. Also, we would like to see "smart" fights, with good use of tactics and strategies. What we would not like to see is so called "cock

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fighting", a brawl without proper techniques, defence nor tactics.

So, you must demonstrate:

- 1) "*Sen*" (initiative) attitude
You must not be passive, just reacting to the opponent's moves. You must be active and initiate the fight. You must always seek and create opportunities to attack, and must not miss the opportunities presented by the opponent.
- 2) Basic weapons of Karate are *Tsuki* (punch), *Keri* (kick) and *Uchi* (strike).
Although sweeps and throws are frequently used, they should lead to a decisive attack by *Tsuki*, *Keri* or *Uchi*.
- 3) Strong "*Kime*" (sharp and powerful techniques)
Although they should be well controlled, your decisive techniques should be powerful enough to stop the opponent.
- 4) The basic idea of traditional martial arts, as a means of self defence, is "the shorter the fight, the better". Your sparring should be an amalgamation of many short decisive fights. Whenever an opportunity arises, created or presented, you must finish the opponent with a decisive technique. Then you start a new fight, although the opponent is the same person.
- 5) You should not waste techniques nor moves. From a strategic point of view, there are two kinds of techniques, "*Sute-waza*" (throw away techniques) and "*Kime-waza*" (finishing techniques). "*Sute-waza*" means techniques which you have no intention of hitting or finishing the opponent with, but which are used to create an opportunity to attack decisively with "*Kime-waza*". So, "*Sute-waza*" should lead to "*Kime-waza*". What we would not like to see is a prolonged fight with lots of wasted techniques which do not lead to any decisive attack.
- 6) "Block and Counter" is the basic concept of Karate as means of self defence. Just going back or blocking without counter attack, when attacked, is not how a karate-ka should fight. When the opponent attacks you, you should not go back. You should either move forward or step to the side. The only acceptable situation is when you "go back in order to move forward or attack". If your fighting is like "see-saw" fighting (when one attacks, the other goes back and vice versa) or the previous "time-wasting" fighting, your chance to pass the grading is very slim.
- 7) You should not stand still and get stiff. This is called "*Itsuki*" (noun) or "*Itsuku*" (verb), and must be avoided. This usually happens when one has no attitude of "*Sen*" or when one has fear. So, you must keep moving and stay relaxed and focused. Important elements of martial arts are "*Te-sabaki*" (hand manipulation), "*Ashi-sabaki*" (Foot work) and "*Tai-sabaki*" (body movement).
- 8) "*Ki-Ken-Tai-no-Itchi*" (unification of mind, fist and body)
"*Ken*" (fist) is the symbol of technique. So, this saying means "unification of mind, technique and body". When you make a decisive attack, you must do so with total commitment and the whole body behind it. So, hesitant attacks without commitment should be avoided. This "hesitant" fighting is another sure way to fail your grading.

(last reviewed on 21st October 2003)