

Examination Program 1st DAN

Prerequisites:

- ✓ A minimum of 1 year practice 4 times per week since the last exam (1st KYU)
- ✓ Knowledge of the techniques and theory required for all KYU exams
- ✓ Consent of the dojo's technical director

The literal translation of some Japanese terms is placed between quotation marks "...".

Technical program

Attack		Techniques	Explanatory comments, theoretical elements
SUWARIWAZA			"practice on the knees"
Shomenuchi kiawase	1	Ikkyo, nikyo, sankyo, yonkyo omote/ura	omote: <i>mae ashi irimi</i> ura: <i>ushiro ashi irimi</i>
	2	Jiyuwaza	
TACHIWAZA			"standing practice"
Shomenuchi kiawase	3	Iriminage and tenchinage	All with falling 1. basic 2. variation(s) 1. <i>ate mi</i> 2. <i>hikitsuke</i>
	4	Kotegaeshi	
	5	Aikigoshi	
	6	Sumiotoshi	
	7	Udegarami	
Shomenuchi	8	Jiyuwaza	
Katatetori aihanmi	9	Ikkyo	1. <i>ushiro ashi irimi</i> <i>tenkan tenshin</i> initial contact <i>chudan yang ura</i> 2. <i>tenkan tenshin</i> initial contact <i>jodan yang omote</i> 1. <i>ura</i> (control elbow!) 2. <i>omote</i> (theory <i>nikyo</i>)
Katatetori gyakuhanmi	10	Ikkyo	1. <i>omote</i> (remote control) 2. <i>ura (ate mi)</i>
Katatetori aihanmi	11	Iriminage and kotegaeshi	<i>tenkan tenshin sabaki, jodan sabaki</i> 1. basic 2. variation
Katatetori gyakuhanmi	12	Iriminage and kotegaeshi	
Katatetori aihanmi	13	Jiyuwaza	
Katatetori gyakuhanmi	14	Jiyuwaza	
Ryotetori	15	Kokyunage	According to the logic of the 8 forms of <i>tenchinage</i> : 1. <i>torifune kokyunage (jodan sabaki - direct)</i> 2. <i>torifune kokyunage (chudan sabaki - direct)</i> 3. <i>nentenmakiotoshi kokyunage (jodan sabaki)</i> 4. <i>makiotoshi kokyunage (chudan sabaki)</i> 5. <i>flamenco kokyunage (jodan sabaki - vertical cut)</i> 6. <i>flamenco kokyunage (chudan sabaki - horizontal cut)</i> 7. a) <i>chin shin kiri otoshi (jodan sabaki)</i> b) <i>torifune kokyunage (jodan sabaki)</i> 8. a) <i>chin shin kiri otoshi (chudan sabaki)</i> b) <i>torifune kokyunage (chudan sabaki)</i>
Ryo eritori	16	Kokyunage	<i>taninzutori</i>
Katate ryotetori	17	Shihonage	<i>tanren, tenkan tenshin sabaki</i> : 1. <i>jjyimusubi</i> 2. <i>tekubigaeshi</i> <i>karamiosae, tenkan tenshin sabaki</i> : 3. <i>kamihanen sabaki</i> 4. <i>shimohanen sabaki</i>
	18	Jiyuwaza	

Ushiro ryotetori	19	Chinshin Kokyunage	<i>mae ashi tenshin</i> , 1. <i>mae ashi irimi</i> 2. <i>ushiro ashi irimi</i> 3. via <i>hantachi</i> , <i>seiza</i> and dive
	20	Koshinage	<i>mae ashi tenshin</i> , 1. hand crosses over the head 2. <i>mae ashi irimi</i> , via <i>ikkyo kuzushi</i>
	21	Kotegaeshi	<i>mae ashi tenshin</i> , <i>mae ashi irimi</i> : 1. <i>tate ichimonji</i> , basic, on the 2 nd hand 2. <i>yoko ichimonji gedan</i> , variation, on the 1 st hand on the 1 st hand, <i>mae ashi tenshin</i> : 3. <i>hitoemi</i> , <i>ushiro ashi irimi tenkan</i> , basic 4. <i>ushiro ashi tenkan</i> , basic behind back
	22	Jiyuwaza	
Katatori menuchi	23	Ikkyo	1. <i>maeashi irimi: omote</i> 2. <i>ushiroashi irimi tenkan: ura</i> 3. <i>tenkan tenshin uchinote: omote</i> 4. <i>tenkan tenshin katanote: omote</i>
	24	Jiyuwaza	<i>tenkan tenshin sabaki</i>
Chudantsuki	25	Uchikaitensankyo	<i>soto sabaki</i>
	26	Shihonage	<i>uchi sabaki</i>
	27	Jiyuwaza	
Yokomenuchi	28	Teguruma	<i>ushiro ashi irimi tenkan han tachi</i>
	29	Shihonage	<i>tori: mae ashi tenkan, mikiri sabaki</i> , <i>then ushiro ashi irimi tenkan</i> <i>uke: attacks</i>
	30	Kotegaeshi	1. <i>yokomen uchi – yokomen uchi</i> 2. <i>yokomen uchi – gyaku-yokomen uchi</i>
	31a	Ikkyo, nikyo, sankyo, yonkyo, gokyo	1. <i>ushiro ashi irimi tenkan, tatakiotoshi ura: techniques omote</i> 2. <i>mae ashi irimi irimi, tatakiotoshi omote: techniques ura</i>
Shomenuchi	31b	Ikkyo, nikyo, sankyo, yonkyo, gokyo	1. <i>maeashi irimi: omote</i> 2. <i>ushiroashi irimi tenkan: ura</i> , <i>for gokyo, take the grip jodan</i>
Tanto	32	Tantotori	<i>chudan tsuki</i> a) <i>uchi sabaki:</i> - <i>gokyo</i> - <i>shihonage</i> <i>omote</i> - <i>hiji kime osae</i> <i>omote</i> - <i>others</i> b) <i>soto sabaki:</i> - <i>kotegaeshi</i> - <i>ushiro kubi jime</i> - <i>hiji kime osae ura</i> - <i>uchi kaiten sankyo</i> - <i>ude hishigi</i> - <i>ude garami yonkyo</i> - <i>/sankyo nage</i> <i>yokomen uchi</i> c) <i>uchi sabaki:</i> - <i>tatakiotoshi ura</i> <i>shihonage-tenchinage</i> d) <i>soto sabaki:</i> - <i>ainuke →b)</i>

Buki waza “weapons practice”	katas¹	Explanatory comments, Theoretical Elements
Kumi tachi		“work with <i>bokken</i> ”
1	Ichi no tachi “father” & “son”	1 st <i>bokken kata</i>
2	Ni no tachi “father” & “son”	2 nd <i>bokken kata</i>
3	San no tachi “father” & “son”	3 rd <i>bokken kata</i>
4	Yon no tachi “father” & “son”	4 th <i>bokken kata</i>
5	Go no tachi “father” & “son”	5 th <i>bokken kata</i>
6	Ki musubi no tachi “father” & “son”	6 th <i>bokken kata</i>

¹The exact detailed descriptions of the katas required in the exam are described in the book “Aikido Sanshinkai: Buki Waza, the practice of weapons in Aikido”. This book can be obtained directly from *Dojo de Neuchâtel - Espace Culturel* or ordered over the internet.

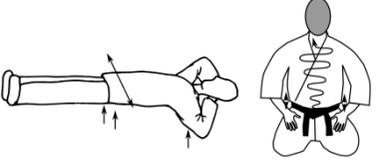
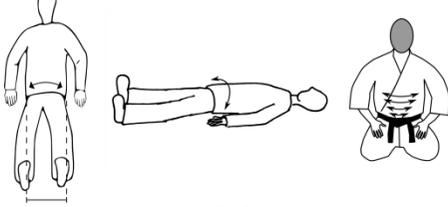
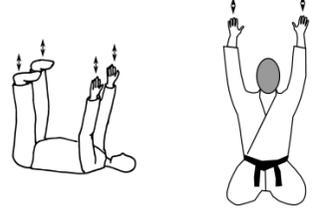
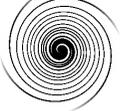
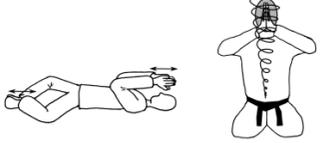
Kumi jo		"work with the jo"
7	1 st kata of Ikeda Sensei	<i>omote kata</i>
8	2 nd kata of Ikeda Sensei	<i>ura kata</i>
9	3 rd kata of Ikeda Sensei	<i>hiki otoshi kata</i>
10	4 th kata of Ikeda Sensei	<i>mae otoshi kata</i>
11	Kata 38	alone and with partner
Hojo		From Kashima Shinden Jikishinkage-ryū
12	haru no tachi ² "father" & "son"	"spring sword"
13	natsu no tachi "father" & "son"	"summer sword"
14	Aki no tachi "father" & "son"	"autumn sword"
15	Fuyu no tachi "father" & "son"	"winter sword"

Genki waza "techniques for health"	forms³	Explanatory comments, Theoretical Elements
Kokyu ho	Breathing	"forms of breathing"
1	Mizu no kokyu	"breathing of water"
2	Tsu no kokyu	"breathing of earth"
3	Kaze no kokyu	"breathing of wind"
4	Hi no kokyu	"breathing of fire"
5	Kokyu soren i. jiritsu shinkei wo kappatsu ni suru kokyu ii. zenshin no shinkei wo kappatsu ni suru kokyu iii. ibuki iv. hai no hataraki wo yoku suru kokyu 1 v. hai no hataraki wo yoku suru kokyu 2 vi. rokkotsukin wo kyoka suru kokyu vii. mune wo hirogeru viii. ketsuekijunkan wo kappatsu suru kokyu ix. kyome x. kiai	i. stimulation of the autonomic nervous system ii. stimulation of the nervous system in the whole body iii. vital force iv. stimulation of the respiratory system 1 v. stimulation of the respiratory system 2 vi. reinforcement of the intercostal respiratory muscles vii. opening of the chest viii. breathing for the stimulation of the circulatory system ix. purification of the lungs (to evacuate disease) x. scream, stimulation of the vital force
Genkikai	Ground exercises	"health system"
7	Yodo ho 動法	"Method to nurture, develop and refine movement"
8	Mo kan undo 毛管運動	"Exercise for the capillary"
9	Gassho gaseki undo 合掌合蹠運動	"Exercise of the joined palms of the hands and soles of feet"
10	Kingyo undo 金魚運動	"Fish exercise (goldfish)"

² This kata is the subject of an article in the SSKL N°7 in which it is detailed step by step. This article can be downloaded free of charge on the site www.dojo-ne.ch in section San Shin Kai Letter.

³ All the health exercises are described in details in the book "Regenerative Gymnastics Genkikai". This book can be obtained directly from *Dojo de Neuchâtel - Espace Culturel* or ordered over the internet.

Theoretical knowledge
Connections Aikido – Hojo – Genkikai: Sanshinkai Aikido

Associated natural elements	Basic Aikido techniques ⁴	Associated direction and fundamental movement	Hojo no kata	Seasons	Sounds	Genkikai Ground exercises
water	ikkyo / sumi otoshi	up-down (or down-up) 	haru no tachi	spring	“mmhh” “uuu”	 kingyo undo
earth	nikyo / kotegaeshi	lateral (left-right or right-left) 	natsu no tachi	summer	“ooo”	 yodo ho
air	sankyo / iriminage	backwards- forwards or forwards- backwards 	aki no tachi	autumn	“aaa”	 mo kan undo
fire	yonkyo / shihonage	spiral or circle 	fuyu no tachi	winter	“eee” “iii”	 gassho gasseki undo

⁴ To understand the connection with the classification of the 32 basic techniques please refer to «Sheet A», which is available as a download from www.dojo-ne.ch



The black belt – 1st *Dan* – *shodan*

For the general public the words “black belt” evoke respect and a certain admiration. The passing of the black belt exam indeed shows one's tenacity and perseverance in Aikido training. That means at least five years of regular practice. *shodan* (1st *dan*) literally signifies “rank of the beginner”.

Sho means «what starts», thus the first *Dan* must be regarded as THE beginning of an aikidoka's life. After having spent years learning the technical forms one starts to grasp the idea of Aikido: the body posture, position and movement in space, concentration, harmony, physical and mental coordination, energy work and the pacifist philosophy that it promotes.

The practitioner may consider various levels of Aikido practice according to his/her wishes:

1. *Physical practice, sport aspect*: from the point of view of self-defence one knows the difference between training between friends and the aggression on the street, the black belt does not guarantee our invincibility, but rather the better management of oneself and the precursory events of a conflict. The ultimate effectiveness in self-defence is not to fight.
2. *Personal development*: the *shodan* means also being aware of the basic concepts of the non-violent philosophy of Aikido. It is also a question of having developed sensitivity, making it possible to recognise the different most evident states of being (merry, happy, annoyed, frightened, sad, etc.) of the people who surround us and their characteristic signs. Work bringing body and mind together is started (meditation, energetic exercises, visualizations).
3. *Spiritual development*: the practitioner conceiving Aikido as his Way has acquired good methods to devote himself to it more personally and closely. He can little by little conceive his program of personal training according to his capacities and needs. Aikido induces, provokes and requires above all to work on oneself.

The 1st *dan* aikidoka must be able to reproduce the techniques described in the *kyu* and 1st *dan* programs with a higher precision than was required at the time of taking the *kyu* examinations, because he starts to master the essential knowledge for really “executing Aikido”. He has accomplished the first round of the basic concepts of Aikido.

The *dan* system which exists in many other martial arts, evaluates the technical level of the practitioner, but also behaviour and his/her internal development in relation to the art practiced. In Aikido, the technical examinations take place up to and including the 4th *dan*. After this, technical knowledge is not tested anymore, it's the investment in the promotion and development of Aikido as well as the human qualities which lead to access higher grades.

A holder of a *Dan* grade is called a *yudansha* (有段者). One must be at least sixteen years old at the time of taking the black belt examination. He/She is diligent in taking part in the training courses for *yudansha* referred to as *yudansha* and *shidoshakai* (from 2nd *dan*) in order to maintain level and to continue progress.

It is good that the achievement of a rank motivates the student to progress. But it should never give birth to a feeling of superiority towards those who have a lower rank or not yet any rank (*mukyu*). A belt “moreover” increases the responsibility of the student. Indeed, it becomes his responsibility to correctly transmit his knowledge to the least advanced. This fact becomes all the more important at the time of receiving the first black belt, because the view of the others towards us changes. One becomes, even in spite of oneself, an example that others follow. One must therefore be conscious of one's behaviour at all times. Being black belt, one must continue to be involved assiduously in the two roles *tori* and *uke*.

One can be trusted to carry the rank, which one has acquired through hard endeavour, but one must remain humble. As a beginner aikidoka – *shodan* –, although holder of a black belt, it is always necessary to be aware of the ego which witnesses the newly obtained rank. Avoid judgement of other more or less advanced practitioners, or other Aikido styles. Even if sometimes one feels this emotion arising in oneself, it should be remembered that one makes Aikido for his/her self, to polish his/her body, spirit and soul.