



White Belt Handout

Stanford Jujitsu Club, 2009–2010

Introduction

Welcome to the Stanford Jujitsu Club! All new members automatically start out at the rank of white belt. This handout provides these white belts with essential information regarding the Club's dynamics and structure. *All white belts are required to carefully read through this handout so that they understand their responsibilities and the Club's expectations of them.* Sections marked with asterisks occur toward the end of the handout and are required reading only for those who decide to stay with the Club and attain rank in our style of jujitsu.

Club Overview

The Stanford Jujitsu Club practices Zen Budokai Aiki Jujitsu, a modern form of the Japanese martial art of jujitsu. It is an eclectic martial art with roots primarily in judo, several forms of jujitsu (mostly Danzan Ryu), and Japanese karate (mostly Shotokan), yet it also contains elements of wrestling, boxing, and Brazilian (Gracie) jujitsu. Our comprehensive style includes throws, joint locks, strikes, submission holds, groundwork, comealongs, and emergency escapes needed in life-threatening situations. Our main emphasis is on mastering practical methods of self-defense in response to unarmed and armed attacks that might occur on the street where “anything goes”. However, improved self-awareness, coordination, and conditioning are equally important benefits obtained from studying our style of martial art. We do not compete in tournaments though we do engage in some low-level sparring at advanced ranks.

All members of the Stanford community are invited to join our friendly and relaxed atmosphere. The Club is open to new members at the start of each academic quarter and no previous martial arts experience is necessary to join.

The following table serves as a brief summary of basic Club information:

Martial Art	Japanese Jujitsu	
Style	Zen Budokai Aiki Jujitsu	
Head Instructor	Jim Moses, 9th dan	
When	MW: 7:30–9:30 p.m. F: 7:00–9:00 p.m. (green belts and above only)	
Where	Wrestling Room (010), Arrillaga Family Sports Center	
Fees	Stanford Student	\$60/quarter
	Stanford-Affiliated Non-Student [†]	\$100/quarter
	Spouse of Stanford-Affiliated	\$200/quarter
Website	jujitsu.stanford.edu	
2009-10 Officers	President: Keith Mosher (kmosher@stanford.edu) Treasurer: Dimitri Tsamis (dtsamis@stanford.edu)	

合
気
柔
術

The Japanese kanji for *aiki jujitsu*.

[†] Faculty, post-docs, staff, and alumni.

Trial Period & Dues

Since Stanford students (both grad and undergrad) make up the backbone of the Club and since the hours of the Arrillaga Family Sports Center (in which class meets) are subject to Stanford's academic calendar, the Club is inextricably tied to Stanford's academic schedule. This means the Club operates on a quarterly basis (including summer). A quarter is 10-12 weeks long. *New members are invited to join the Club during the beginning of any quarter.* The exact dates of this "trial period" are posted on the Club's website and announced in class at the beginning of each quarter, though it is usually the first 1-2 weeks of the quarter. After that, potential members will have to wait until the start of the next quarter to join. This restriction is in place to allow the level of the class to progress steadily throughout the quarter without having to continually rehash basic principles.

The trial period allows potential members to try out the Club for a few weeks without any obligation. However, *at the end of the trial period, those who would like to continue with the Club (both new and returning members) are required to submit dues to the Club's treasurer.* The Club has a graduated fee structure; see the table on the first page of this handout to determine under which bracket you fall. Cash is acceptable but checks made payable to the Stanford Jujitsu Club are preferred.

Attendance

Though the Club has no formal attendance policy, bear in mind the following:

- Attending class less than twice a week makes progress difficult and slow.
- Those training you are investing a significant amount of their own time and effort into you.
- Since training with a partner is essential to our martial art, any lack of progress by one individual usually holds back not only the progress of those at the same rank, but sometimes the entire class.

Consequently, *regular attendance (2 classes per week) is expected.* If you are a Stanford student, please consider your academic schedule carefully to make sure you can regularly attend class. Students should note that as the quarter wears on their workload will inevitably increase. It is during these busy weeks at the end of the quarter that it is most important to realize that our training can serve as an excellent release of energy to reinvigorate your studying!

Note that Friday classes are only open to green belts and higher. Upon passing the exam for green belt, members are invited to train on Fridays.

Tardiness & Mat Cleaning

Class starts promptly with warm-ups. Please arrive early if you need extra time to prepare. Being late to class is disruptive and increases the likelihood of injury due to insufficient warming-up. Consequently, *should you arrive late, you will be required to help sweep and mop the floors after class.* Black belts are exempt from this policy. As part of the agreement between the Club and the wrestling team, the Club is only allowed to use the wrestling room if, among other things, we clean the mats after every class. This involves first sweeping the mats and then mopping them with a wet mop. Ask any member of the Club for details on this process. In the case that no one is late or not enough people are late to get the job fully done, all members are expected to share cleaning responsibilities.

Email List

In order to receive Club announcements, new members need to subscribe to the Club's email list. You are *not* automatically added to the list when you join the Club, so it is important that new members do so as soon as possible. Though it is mostly used to make announcements regarding the class schedule, the email list can also be used by members to discuss topics related to jujitsu.

To subscribe, go to mailman.stanford.edu. At the bottom of the page enter "jujitsu" (no quotes) to the left of the "Go To Subscriber Page" button. Press the button and, on the new page, follow the directions under the "Subscribing to Jujitsu" section.

What to Wear

During your first month or two with the Club, you should come in a t-shirt and shorts, sweats, or anything else that is not too restrictive or hot and that you would not mind having grabbed or stretched. Do not wear any clothing with buckles, hard buttons, or anything that might scratch you or your training partners. Please note:

- We train barefoot. Please remove your shoes and socks before walking onto the mat.
- Remove all jewelry (watches, earrings, necklaces, rings, piercings, etc.) before class.
- Keep your fingernails and toenails well-trimmed to prevent them from catching on clothing or skin.
- Hair longer than shoulder-length should be tied up and out of the way.

If you plan on continuing with the Club and testing for your first rank, yellow belt, (see the “Belt Promotion Exam” section for more on testing), you will need to get a *gi*¹ (training uniform) specifically designed for jujitsu or judo. A *gi* costs about \$40; this includes a heavy cotton jacket, pants, and a white belt. To order a *gi*, speak to Jim Moses, our head instructor, who gets them at wholesale prices. You will be given a new belt (free of charge) when you advance to a new rank.

If you already have a *gi* from a previous martial art, you can wear it in class provided it meets *all* of the following criteria:

- It is specifically designed for jujitsu or judo. Note that a *gi* designed for karate or tae kwon do is much thinner and will get torn.
- It is white or off-white (unbleached). Note that the black *gi* is reserved solely for black belts (who usually just wear the black pants).
- It does not contain any logos, patches, or insignias (except those from other Zen Budokai schools).
- It is accompanied by a white belt (unless you have achieved rank in another Zen Budokai school, in which case you should wear the belt for that rank).

Once you obtain a *gi*, men have the option of wearing a t-shirt underneath and should also consider wearing a cup. Women must wear a t-shirt underneath their *gi* and should also wear a sports bra. Please make an effort to always wear your *gi* properly, e.g., do not wear a *gi* that has been significantly damaged or torn. Please ask any member of the Club to show you how to tie your belt.

Finally, please bring a water bottle to class to keep yourself hydrated. There is filtered tap water available in the wrestling room to refill your bottle. Though paper cups are often available, to reduce waste we highly recommend bringing your own water bottle.

Hygiene

Since we train in close contact, it is extremely important to practice good personal hygiene. If you neglect your hygiene, you risk putting yourself and others in uncomfortable situations. Further, you negatively affect the training of others as their focus will inevitably be drawn away from their training and towards your lack of hygiene.

Towards this end, you will be sweating in class and often rolling around and falling on the mats, so never wear the same set of clothes to class without first washing them. Similarly, once you obtain a *gi*, wash it and

any t-shirt underneath *after every class*. Some people think they can get away with this hoping nobody will notice, but others can most certainly tell! If you decide to stick with the Club indefinitely, considering buying several *gi*'s. This way you can wear a clean one to every class without having to do laundry after every class.

Etiquette

The Club has a casual and relaxed atmosphere, yet we do adhere to some basic Japanese martial art traditions beyond the wearing of a *gi*. At the beginning of class, we always line up according to rank. Please pay attention to this and find your appropriate spot in line. When changing partners during class, acknowledge both the partner you are leaving and your new partner with a bow. When entering or leaving the *dojo* (practice hall)—in our case, the wrestling room *mats* (not the wrestling room itself)—students should bow towards the center of the far wall. The instructor will end class by asking all students to line up against the wall and bow out. Again, we always line up by rank. Note that the Club does not use honorifics (*sensei*, professor, master, etc.) for addressing senior members and instructors; first names are more than sufficient.

Class Structure

In general, we train as a single group for approximately the first half of class. This always includes warm-ups (jogging, cardio-building exercises such as sprints or jumping rope, and basic strength-building exercises such as sit-ups, push-ups, and pull-ups), and is then followed by some combination of *ukemi waza* (breakfalling and rolling techniques, or literally, “techniques of receiving with the body”), basic karate drills, and/or throwing exercises. Working out as a group develops class cohesion and allows everyone, particularly the instructors, to get a feel for the level of the class as a whole.

For karate drills, a senior member will demonstrate a technique and then lead the class through it. To assist you, often an instructor or senior member will wander through the class and offer constructive comments. We take turns counting out each exercise (usually in sets of 10), so pay attention and be prepared for your turn. Focus on proper technique (using your hips to generate power, relaxing all muscles but those required, demonstrating good stances, maintaining balance, etc.) rather than speed and power. Speed and power will only come with hours of practice using proper technique.

For the last half of class, we split into several smaller groups according to rank. During this time, we work with our charts (explained in more detail later in the

¹ *Gi* is pronounced /gee/, which rhymes with the word “bee”.

“Charts” section). Our training is based on simulating realistic encounters one might find in the street. This process consists of one person, the *uke*² (attacker, or receiver of technique), attacking another person, the *tori* (defender, or demonstrator of technique). We usually work in pairs, but sometimes in groups of three or four.

During this part of class, each group of students is led by an instructor or more advanced belt. All students (except white belts) spend a significant amount of time teaching those of lower rank. This not only gives everyone more individual attention but, by having to teach, students gain a much deeper understanding of each technique’s subtleties. Even though the person training you has a better understanding of the technique than you, they almost always still need to refine their own execution of the technique (though their issues are often more subtle than yours) and so will often rotate in with you to get in some practice themselves while they are teaching.

Safety

When executed at full speed, jujitsu is designed to inflict pain and injury, often severe and occasionally lethal. This cannot and should not be ignored or forgotten. However, the Club would very quickly run out of interested members if this were the case in class! So, to prevent injury, safety is of the utmost importance in the Club. Though serious injury is extremely rare in the Club, most members of the Club eventually experience some sort of minor injury similar to those found in sports: bruises and strained (hyperextended) joints.

Almost all injuries in jujitsu (except perhaps bruises) are the result of improper technique or lack of control. Thus, *all new techniques should be executed in a slow and controlled manner—no exceptions!* The Club will not tolerate any students who recklessly endanger the safety of other members. Always concentrate on proper form rather than speed. This is particularly true for beginners where full appreciation for the danger of jujitsu techniques is often masked by inexperience. This is such a common mistake that it bears repeating: *new students must go slow!* Don’t worry if the technique seems impractical at such a slow speed; practicality will only come by learning slowly at first and gradually increasing your speed. Always keep in mind that few techniques in jujitsu require strength; if you find yourself “muscling” a technique, you are probably doing it wrong and therefore only increasing the likelihood of injury. The essence of jujitsu is to redirect the attacker’s own force and use it to your advantage, not to resist and struggle against an attack by fighting back with your own strength. The for-

mer approach might save your life while the latter could very well end it.

In the context of safety, we can divide the techniques of the Club into four general areas: throws, joint locks, strikes, and chokes (or strangles). Each of these areas has their own unique safety concerns which will be addressed separately.

The first thing you will learn in class is how to take a fall properly, or *ukemi waza*. Throws are an integral part of our curriculum and in order to take them without injury, falling—or more correctly, breakfalling—must become second nature. A proper breakfall, in its most basic form, is executed by aligning your body as you are thrown so that you land in such a way as to distribute the force of the impact across as much surface area of the body as possible while also protecting your head, neck, and other joints from injury. This distribution of the impact force includes a hard slap of the hand(s) on the ground. When performing a throw, it is the *tori*’s responsibility to make sure the *uke* can execute the breakfall for that particular throw. Never perform a new throw without the supervision of an instructor or more advanced belt; projecting another’s body through the air develops large forces that must be carefully managed. To new students, getting thrown is often the most intimidating aspect of our curriculum. However, by relaxing your body and *slapping hard and quickly*, getting thrown will actually become enjoyable (most of the time!).

The most common injury associated with joint locks is mildly hyperextended joints. To help prevent such injuries, the *uke* needs to “tap” as soon as they *start* to feel pain. Tapping is used universally in the martial arts to indicate a joint lock, pin, or submission hold is working and any further application of it will cause severe pain or injury. The *uke* taps by quickly slapping their hand several times on the *tori*’s body, the mat, or their own body. Ideally, the *uke* should try to tap the *tori*’s body, as this signal is the most clear. The sound or feeling created by the tap lets the *tori* know that their technique is working and that they should *immediately* release the technique. Sometimes, neither hand is available to tap because they are entangled in a lock or pin, in which case the *uke* can either snap their fingers or slap a foot on the mat. Do not use verbal commands instead of tapping as they can be easily misunderstood, if even heard.

The karate strikes used in our curriculum can generate tremendous power. Thus, *actual contact must be avoided when striking*, at least in the early stages of training. This is especially true for dynamic armbreaks (armbreaks resulting from a strike as opposed to a joint lock), where surprisingly little force is needed to break an arm. Since slight contact is sometimes inevitable, the *tori* should intentionally aim off to the side of the joint in a dynamic armbreak. Executing crisp and force-

² *Uke* is pronounced /ooh-kay/, not /ooh-key/. The latter is the pronunciation of *uki* (floating), another word we commonly use.

ful strikes without contact not only keeps everyone safe, but it teaches control. In fact, if the uke were to throw a punch and the tori were to miss the block, the uke should have enough control to “pull” the punch without significant contact.

The choke, synonymous with strangle, is a submission hold executed by compressing the neck. There are two types: those applied to the front of the neck thereby putting pressure on the windpipe and limiting air flow to the lungs—the air choke—and those applied to the sides of the neck thereby putting pressure on the carotid arteries and limiting blood flow to the brain—the blood choke. In reality, most chokes involve some combination of both or can be applied in slightly different ways to emphasize one or the other. For obvious safety reasons, most chokes are learned at advanced ranks; you will only encounter a couple before then, the first being *hadaka jime*³ (literally, “naked choke”).

The air choke gives a suffocating feeling which often induces coughing and can be quite painful. It should always be applied slowly and with caution, as *very little* force is needed to damage the windpipe. The uke must remember to tap immediately upon feeling any pain.

The blood choke will cause one to “sleep” (lose consciousness) in a matter of seconds. It is unique because it is the only submission technique that does not result in pain, or at least not enough to lead to a tap. Thus, the uke needs to pay special attention to signs that they are losing consciousness (pressure in the head, lightheadedness, narrowing field of vision, etc.) and tap out before it reaches this point. The tori should never rely solely on the uke to tap in the case of a choke; if the tori has been applying the technique for more than a few seconds with no tap, they should either release the choke or get verbal confirmation from the uke that they are okay.

Finally, please make note of the following:

- For legal reasons, all members of the Club are required by Stanford University to fill out and sign a waiver before participating in class.
- If you have any injuries, please tell your training partners so they can refrain from techniques which might exacerbate the injury.
- A first-aid kit is available in the wrestling room should it be needed.

*Charts

During the second half of class when we split into smaller groups according to rank, we usually work off the Club’s various charts. These charts list all of the Club’s techniques, each chart consisting of some grouping of related

techniques. Most of our charts are organized as a column of attacks on the left-hand side and a column (or columns) of corresponding defenses on the right-hand side. The actual charts are poster-sized and are intended to be propped up against the wall for easy viewing. As of the 2005-06 academic year, however, we have lost our storage space in the wrestling room. Without a convenient place for storing the poster-sized charts, their use has been suspended and we have thus been forced to use printouts of the original charts. We hope to regain use of the poster-sized charts in the near future, but no solution to our shortage of storage space is yet imminent.

There are 19 charts used by the Club:

- ***Aiki Jujitsu 1–4*** (4 charts): techniques emphasizing joint locks and submissions but interspersed with throws and karate-style strikes and kicks.
- ***Applied Karate 1–6*** (6 charts): techniques emphasizing karate-style strikes, kicks, and blocks, though throws appear on later charts.
- ***Osoto Gari***⁴: variations of osoto gari, the first and most basic throw taught in the Club.
- ***Nage Waza***: all of the Club’s non-joint-locking throws, almost all of which are from judo.
- ***Ukemi Waza***: breakfalls and rolls.
- ***Groundwork***: basic ground-fighting techniques.
- ***Osaekomi Waza***: judo-style pins for immobilizing an attacker on the ground.
- ***Comealongs***: techniques to control and move an attacker without inflicting permanent damage.
- ***Gyaku***⁵: throws followed by a finishing technique; some of the Club’s most distinctive techniques.
- ***Shime Waza***: chokes and strangles.
- ***Tensho Aiki***: advanced throws requiring little effort but precise timing and technique.

Additionally, all techniques required for promotion to each rank have been consolidated on seven belt requirement charts, one for each rank of yellow belt through 2nd degree black belt (see the “Belt Ranks” section). Since these seven belt requirement charts list all the Club’s techniques in a concise and logical manner, they are the charts most commonly used in class. For your first rank, yellow belt, you must know the the charts

⁴*Gari* is pronounced /gar-ee/ and rhymes with the word “sorry”. It is not pronounced /gary/. The latter is the pronunciation of the word *geri* (kick), another word we commonly use.

⁵*Gyaku* can mean “reverse” or “opposite”, but here the alternative meaning of “tyranny” or “torture” is intended.

³*Hadaka jime* is pronounced /huh-dah-kuh jee-may/.

Aiki Jujitsu 1, *Osoto Gari*, and *Groundwork*, as well as the first two techniques from *Ukemi Waza* and the first technique from *Shime Waza*. This is all detailed on the *Requirements for Yellow Belt* chart which has been attached to the last page of this handout for your reference. You should put your name on this chart and bring it to each class for reference and so you can use it to take notes. All charts, including the belt requirement charts, are available on the Club's website.

*Terminology

Due to the eclectic nature of Zen Budokai Aiki Jujitsu, the names for our techniques are all over the map: some are in Japanese and some are in English. In fact, sometimes the same technique will be referred to by both its Japanese and English name. This can be overwhelming at first, but take comfort in the fact that the terminology will become second nature as your training progresses.

If you ever have any confusion about a Japanese word used on the charts or otherwise, feel free to ask someone to explain it to you. In addition, there is a Japanese glossary on the Club's website (and a quick search of the internet will reveal many other online glossaries). As an introduction to some of the terminology you will encounter, here are the first ten numbers in Japanese:

1	<i>ichi</i>	6	<i>roku</i>
2	<i>ni</i>	7	<i>shichi</i> ⁶ / <i>nana</i>
3	<i>san</i>	8	<i>hachi</i>
4	<i>shi</i> ⁶ / <i>yon</i>	9	<i>ku</i>
5	<i>go</i>	10	<i>ju</i>

Note that the written Japanese “words” used by the Club are in fact not Japanese at all, but rather *romaji*, or romanizations of Japanese sounds. The Japanese written language uses entirely different symbols (*kanji*, *hiragana*, and *katakana*, to be precise) and hence the words Westerners use are simply attempts at best reproducing, using the Roman alphabet, the sounds the actual Japanese written language implies. For this reason, there is much room for error in both interpretation and spelling when transliterating Japanese words into romaji, so do not be surprised if you see differences amongst the terms used in various other Japanese martial arts or dojos.

*The Kiai

The *kiai*⁷ is a way of focusing and releasing energy as well as regulating breathing. Often the *kiai* can be used to

⁶The word *shi* also means death in Japanese. Hence, *shi* and *shichi* (a combination of *shi* and *chi*) are sometimes avoided for superstitious reasons when counting.

⁷*Kiai* is pronounced /key-eye/.

unbalance or distract your opponent. It is performed as a loud yell during hard karate-style strikes and blocks. It is not necessary to *kiai* on *tensho* (redirecting momentum) moves, but on the other hand it is *rarely* wrong to *kiai*. In general, for any move requiring sharp focus, a *kiai* is probably appropriate. Thus, most throws do not require a *kiai*, but it would be most welcome. You should not *kiai* on moves that extend over time without a single instance of sharp focus, e.g., comealongs.

It is necessary to make the *kiai* habitual by using it regularly during class. A good time to practice your *kiai* is during the karate drills at the beginning of the class when everyone performs their *kiai* simultaneously. It is normal for the *kiai* to feel awkward at first, but as you practice yours and hear others performing theirs, your confidence will increase and your *kiai* will inevitably become second nature. Each person has a unique *kiai*, so don't worry about what you should “say” when you *kiai*. Think of a weightlifter lifting a very heavy weight almost to the point of muscle failure—they invariably yell while exhaling. This is exactly a *kiai*. Note that, during a *kiai*, you do not actually say the word “*kiai*”!

Since *ki* means “inner energy” (same as Chinese *chi*) and *ai* means “harmony”, the word *kiai* can be translated literally as “harmonized inner energy”. Note that the word *aiki*, used to describe our style of jujitsu, also uses *ki* and *ai* but in reverse order. This suggests a connection between the two. This is indeed the case, though the order of the kanji changes the meaning slightly: *kiai* is the projection of one's internal energy independent of another while *aiki* is the harmonizing of one's internal energy with that of another. Nevertheless, this is an issue that is only mentioned in passing so that you are aware of the strong connection between the two words.

*Belt Ranks

Like most Japanese martial arts, the Club uses a colored belt ranking system. Though such a system provides a useful way for students to set goals, gauge progress, and challenge themselves, it is important not to get too caught up in ranks. Think of belt ranks as something that you just so happen to earn along the way towards achieving mastery in a martial art, not vice-versa.

The belt ranking system in Zen Budokai Aiki Jujitsu, like almost all Japanese martial arts, can be divided into black belt degrees (*dan*⁸) and ranks below black belt (*kyu*).⁹ The belt ranks for Zen Budokai Aiki Jujitsu are,

⁸*Dan* is (somewhat confusingly) pronounced /don/.

⁹Don't judge the competency of a martial artist from another system, especially a non-Japanese system, by comparing the color of their belt to that in our system. Belt coloring schemes are not standardized across the various martial arts. Number of years in training is a much better indicator of a martial artist's skill level.

in ascending order:

Kyu Rank		Belt Color
6th kyu	<i>rokukyu</i>	white
5th kyu	<i>gokyu</i>	yellow
4th kyu	<i>yonkyu</i>	green
3rd kyu	<i>sankyu</i>	blue
2nd kyu	<i>nikyu</i>	purple
1st kyu	<i>ikkyu</i>	brown

Dan Rank		Belt Color
1st dan	<i>shodan</i>	black
2nd dan	<i>nidan</i>	black
3rd dan	<i>sandan</i>	black
4th dan	<i>yodan</i>	black
5th dan	<i>godan</i>	black
6th dan	<i>rokudan</i>	red & white
7th dan	<i>shichidan</i>	red & white
8th dan	<i>hachidan</i>	red & white
9th dan	<i>kudan</i>	red
10th dan	<i>judan</i>	red

Note that the numbering of the kyu ranks decreases with ascending order (like a countdown to black belt), while that of the dan ranks increases. The Japanese name for each rank (in italics in the table above) is derived by placing a Japanese number (see the “Terminology” section), its spelling sometimes slightly modified to resolve unnatural pronunciations, in front of the words *kyu* or *dan*.¹⁰ For example, the Japanese word for three is *san*, so 3rd kyu would be *sankyu* and 3rd dan would be *sandan*. However, most people in our Club refer to kyu ranks by belt color and dan ranks by number, e.g., *sankyu* would be referred to as “blue belt” and *sandan* as “3rd degree black belt” or “3rd dan”.

Black belts from 2nd–5th dan may have stripes on their belt, the number of which corresponds to their dan rank. For 6th–8th dan, a belt made up of alternating red and white sections is often worn, while for 9th–10th dan a belt of pure red is often worn (note that pure black belts can also be worn at 6th dan and higher). Hence, any red on a belt indicates a very high-ranking black belt. 10th dan is reserved solely for the founder of our system, Raymond “Duke” Moore (1915–2003).

Each rank up to and including 2nd dan requires knowledge of a set number of techniques, all of which are listed on the various charts mentioned previously in the “Charts” section. Of these ranks, 1st dan is usually the most difficult to achieve since it requires formal demonstration of *all* techniques learned up to that point. The time needed to achieve 1st dan depends on effort put forth in class, previous martial arts experience, and innate ability. However, for those with no martial arts

experience and who attend class regularly (at least twice a week, but usually three times a week), they can expect to obtain 1st dan in approximately 4 years. This is typical of most Japanese martial arts. Note that the Club has a time-at-rank teaching requirement and hence the earliest one can expect to obtain black belt is 3 years.

1st dan, however, is really only the beginning. As we exist in a university setting, an analogy with academia is helpful here. 1st dan is equivalent to a bachelor’s degree: you are now grounded in the basics but are by no means an expert in your field of study. 2nd dan is equivalent to a master’s degree: your understanding of the basics is strong enough that you are starting to connect the dots and approach some level of expertise. Yet just as the requirements for a master’s are explicitly laid out, i.e., a master’s requires mostly coursework and only a small amount of research (if any), the requirements for 2nd dan are also explicitly laid out as they were for all previous ranks. Here, coursework is analogous to the rote learning of physical techniques in the martial arts whereas research is analogous to the creation of your own solutions to martial arts situations as a result of a deep understanding of the underlying principals. Continuing our analogy: ranks of 3rd dan and above are equivalent to the various stages on the path from a master’s degree to a doctorate to a post-doctorate position to an assistant professorship to a tenured professorship to an emeritus professorship.¹¹ Hence, only at the ranks of 3rd dan and above does it truly make sense to consider a black belt an “expert” of a particular martial art.

Analogies aside, to achieve 3rd dan in the Zen Budokai system one must usually obtain a black belt (or at least several years of study) in another martial art. More importantly, all ranks of 3rd dan and above are bestowed upon individuals based upon their years of experience, dedication to the Club and the art in general, teaching ability, and ultimately the discretion of their head instructor and senior black belts of the system. In the entire Zen Budokai system, there are only approximately 20 black belts at 5th dan and higher. In addition to Duke Moore, you should be familiar with two of these: Tim Delgman (9th dan, current head of Zen Budokai and head instructor the San Francisco Zen Budokai dojo) and Jim Moses (9th dan, head instructor of the Club).

*Belt Promotion Exams

In order to advance in rank, students must pass a promotion exam held during class. In general, there are no set exam dates—the student and head instructor will mutually decide on a testing date as the student’s train-

¹⁰The only rank that doesn’t follow this format is *shodan*, or 1st degree black belt, which translates literally as “lowest dan”.

¹¹It should thus not be surprising that many Japanese martial arts use the term “professor” for high-level black belts.

ing progresses. There is, however, one exception to this rule: *white belts will be tested for yellow belt at the end of their first quarter with the Club.* The exact date will be set each quarter. This is done to motivate new students to attend class regularly and to make sure they progress. Even if you fail your first exam, the experience will highlight your weaknesses which will then serve to focus your training. Generally, there will be at least one other black belt in attendance during the exam who will, with the head instructor, judge your competency.¹² Remember, you will be expected to have purchased a gi by the time you test for yellow belt. Note that the Club does not charge any fees for testing.

The promotion exam tests your proficiency performing techniques at your current level and your readiness to learn more advanced techniques. You will be expected to know the techniques required for your next rank from memory, i.e., without the charts. Hence, as your testing date nears, you should be training by having somebody call out your techniques rather than by reading them off the charts. Any exam is comprehensive, meaning you should be able to perform any technique from a lower rank (which, of course, is not of concern during your first exam). The exam for 1st dan is the only exam where you will be formally required to demonstrate proficiency in *all* techniques learned from previous ranks as well as those specific to 1st dan.

For yellow belt, the exam takes approximately 20 minutes. For successively higher ranks, the exam usually increases in length, especially since you will be asked to demonstrate select techniques learned at previous ranks. The exam for 1st dan takes several hours and will be judged by high-ranking black belts from the Club as well as other Zen Budokai schools.

Though our promotion exams are not overly formal, they are more so than practice. This sometimes catches white belts off-guard. Thus, it is best to mentally prepare yourself for an audience watching your every move. During an exam, you should be serious and respectful. Do not laugh or chat idly during the exam.

It is most important to demonstrate practical skill during an exam. It is not uncommon for a particular technique to be called and you suddenly blank. This is not a serious situation. More serious, however, is reacting as though the situation were a friendly practice in the dojo. You should not:

- Ask the uke to wait for a second because you will remember the move pretty soon.
- Perform the initial block then pause as you try to recall the technique.

¹²On occasion, the head instructor may not be present at the promotion exam for beginner ranks such as yellow or green belt. However, at least one black or brown belt will always be present.

Instead, you should respond with some reasonable follow-up, regardless of whether or not it was the one called. This is not as difficult as it may seem: by the time you take your first exam, you will have already learned a variety of techniques. If your follow-up technique is indeed reasonable (such as a strike to a vital point), the worst that could happen is that the judges will just call the original technique again.

This is part of an important lesson: projecting confidence. Part of not being a victim is not acting like one. Whether you believe you have done the technique successfully or not, it is more important that you *act* as though you have done exactly what you wished. While the judges no doubt will know the difference, a street attacker, for whom you are training, may not.

Other important points to remember during an exam:

- Bow to the judges and your partner at the beginning and end of your exam. If changing partners during the exam, make sure to exchange bows.
- Demonstrate effective blocks. If a block is required and you have neglected it, you have undermined the remainder of the technique.
- Emphasize strong stances. A strong stance will help you remain balanced and will provide a solid foundation for follow-up techniques.
- Kiai on hard strikes. If you forget to kiai when it is required, you may be asked by the judges to repeat the technique but with a kiai.
- When observing an exam, sit upright and remain quiet and attentive.

*Acknowledgements

The first version of this handout was created in 2001 by Michael Friedlander (1st dan). Most of the text in Michael's version was taken directly from the extensive yet significantly outdated "Complete Curriculum" document created by Don Geddis (3rd dan) in the mid-1990's and which is still available on the Club's website. In 2002, Jonathan "JD" Dirrenberger (1st dan) added significant original material to Michael's version while still preserving his general framework. Hence, though some passages herein are directly attributable to either Michael or Don, most is original content which JD continually updates (last update: September 20, 2009). JD thanks Ben Escoto (1st dan) and Peter Lorentzen (1st dan) for their constructive comments, yet accepts all blame for any errors contained within.

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REQUIREMENTS FOR YELLOW BELT | GOKYU

AIKI JUJITSU 1

1	att. front choke	nagashi uke	haito, cross shuto
2	front choke		winglock
3	att. side headlock	armpit escape	sakotsu
4	side headlock		hair hammerlock
5	side headlock		hair throw
6	right & left	cross shuto uke	spin, sakotsu
7	right & left	cross shuto uke	groin haito, front hadaka jime
8	right roundhouse	cross shuto uke (ko)	ganmen shuto
9	right roundhouse	cross shuto uke	ulna press
10	right roundhouse	cross shuto uke	front hiji, sakotsu
11	right roundhouse	cross shuto uke	stretchbar, wrist twist throw
12	right roundhouse	cross shuto uke	handtwist pivot, hair hammerlock
13	front hug (pinned)	hip push (zen)	windmill, sakotsu
14	rear hug (pinned)	stomp, break out	double windmill, sakotsu
15	bent lapel grab		flex bow
16	2-on-1 wrist grab	clasp hands & sink	ulna press
17	double wrist grab	clasp hands & sink	ulna press
18	double wrist grab		tekubi tori
19	police hammerlock	arm pull (kiba)	side hiji, pivot, outside armbreak, sakotsu
20	att. front hadaka jime	gedan shuto uke	groin haito, pivot, R. mae geri, sakotsu
21	overhead club blow	jodan juji uke	outside armbreak, sakotsu
22	knife thrust	nagashi uke	outside armbreak, inside armtwist
23	knife thrust	nagashi uke	outside armbreak, flex throw, disarm
24	knife thrust	nagashi uke	outside armbreak, rear hadaka jime (zen)
25	handgun on stomach	nagashi uke (step in)	flex throw, disarm

SHIME WAZA (#1)

1	hadaka jime (rear, front)
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UKEMI WAZA (#1-2)

1	back breakfall
2	side breakfall (right, left)

OSOTO GARI

1	front choke		osoto gari (Nage #1)
2	bent lapel grab		osoto gari
3	right roundhouse	cross shuto uke	osoto gari
4	right & left	cross shuto uke	osoto gari
5	right & left	cross shuto uke	R. mae geri, osoto gari
6	front hug (free)	stomp	osoto gari
7	front hug (pinned)	hip push (zen)	osoto gari
8	straight right	nagashi uke	R. mawashi geri, osoto gari
9	att. front choke	nagashi uke	osoto gari
10	att. side headlock	armpit escape	osoto gari
11	att. front hadaka jime	gedan shuto uke	groin haito, pivot, osoto gari
12	rear hadaka jime	stomp	rear osoto gari (Nage #2)
13	rear hug (free)	stomp	rear osoto gari
14	rear hug (pinned)	stomp	rear osoto gari
15	att. full nelson	arm trap, stomp	rear osoto gari

GROUNDWORK

1	standing: circling	far guard, switch sides, stand up
2	standing: closing	knee guard, closed guard
3	in closed guard: att. choke	bridge (low, high)
4	in closed guard: choke	arm thrust, rear hiji
5	in closed guard: choke	juji gatame
6	in closed guard: right & left	block, arm trap
7	in closed guard: right & left	block, hammerlock
8	top of mount (free): choke	bump, bridge & roll
9	top of mount (free): right & left	block, bump, bridge & roll
10	top of mount (pinned)	overhead kiai throw
11	bottom of mount (free): chest push	juji gatame
12	bottom of mount (free): right & left	block, ude garami