In the Pursuit of Kendo

A Guide to the requirements for passing grades up to and including 5th DAN

1st Edition: 1990 Given to the British Kendo Association for Membership use
2nd Edition: 2000 Revised Translation for the Membership of Hizen Dojo
3rd Edition: 2010 Additions and revisions for the Lithuania Kendo Association/Hizen foundation

© copy right. Contact: info@hizenfoundation.org
Acknowledgements

Asano Osamu Sensei
For giving access to the information in Japanese contained within this document.

Mr K Kawano
For helping with first translation in 1990
SHINSA: Grading

From very early on in our Kendo practice we asked to test ourselves against pre-set levels of understanding and ability, these levels have been faced by every one who takes part in the practice of Kendo and they should not be brushed away as if they have no importance. The pursuit of Kendo is about self reflection at various points, these grading’s should be seen as these times of reflection before during and after. Weather one is successful or is unable to pass the level at that time, the grading is a window in on your development. Which the more experienced Judges are viewing your ability to execute the techniques of kendo and your emotional state. At the time of testing often the four sickness of Kendo show themselves, fear, doubt, surprise and confusion, how you deal with them will determine the outcome of the day.

The following pages are to be seen as a guide on what is required for each level in Kendo up to 5th Dan, the requirements become more abstract and only the constant of, hard training of the preceding level will prepare you for further advancement. From the beginner to fifth Dan are seen as the fundamentals of practice and without these expressed physically and mentally correctly the foundation of your practice is very shallow. Various National bodies have variations on the same theme, some have longer time requirements between each level and some have different aspects and elements, you should seek advice from your National body or if your visiting a different country ask what are the standard practice there. From 6th Kyu - 1st Kyu are the requirements based on those used around Europe. From 1st Dan - 5th Dan are the requirements used in Japan for standard grading’s .I hope that you find the information helpful and useful what every your current grade maybe, I have leant a lot from the information and often revisit the text to remind myself that I still have much to learn from the basic of practice.

How you are tested.

First of all, how the examination is carried out. You will be given a number and put with other examinees into selected groups normally by age with which you will have your free practice. Groups are made according to the number of participants. Odd numbers on one side and even numbers on the other, so, 1 and 2 practice. At the finish 2 stands still 3 will bow at the same time as 1 finishes. This bow is the first REI for 3. Then 3 and 2 practice and at the finish 3 stands still 4 bows and practices with 3 and so on.

All instructions are given by "TACHIAI ", the floor manager and Judge’s assistant on the grading area. The signal to start HAJIME will be given and then YAME to stop. In some associations you may be asked to start your grading practice with KIRIKAESHI. The examination starts when you enter the dojo as well as when you face your opponent please remember this point at well times.

To start, move to the indicated point REI with your SHINAI in your hand then follow the TACHI-REI principle, take 3 steps forward, draw your SHINAI and sit down on your toes, SONKYO. When you hear hajime your match starts. It is only a short time and you are expected to give a full account of what skills you have acquired during your everyday practice. Every movement of the examinee is being closely watched by the judges. Regarding clothing: How you wear armour, the length of your MEN-HIMO, (40 cm) creases in your HAKAMA, cleanliness, posture and attitude are all being watched.
KYU GRADES

These are grades given to children in Japan but many countries who do not have high ranking grades to judge or have there own coaching reasons for using them apply them to there grading system. The follow are a basic guide.

6 KYU

SHOMEN UCHI (basic MEN cut) with good KAKEGOE and KIAI
A working understanding of ashi-sabaki
shomen-suburi, renzoku-shomen and choyaku suburi
Basic reigi-saho.

5 KYU

Renzoku-sayumen-suburi
Kirikaeshi cuttingside
Basic Kihon-uchi
Zanshin in all Kihon-uchi
Kendo no kata 1,2,3 Shidachi side only

4 KYU

Chouyaku-suburi done well
Kirikaeshi blocking side
Put on Bogu and rei-shoho (what it entails)
Kendo no kata 1,2,3, with partner

3 KYU

Be able to participate in Enjin Shiai
Have a working understanding of Suriage-waza, Hiki-waza in Keiko
NI-San-dan-waza with Ki-ken-tai no ichi
Kendo no Kata 1,2,3 with parnter with an understanding of Maai
2 KYU

Uchikomi-geiko: Keeping good balance, moving with speed and good Kakegoe with Kiai throughout.

Be able to take part in Shiai and understand basic match rules.

Kendo no Kata 1.2.3 Shidachi and Uchidachi with good Uchimaai (Cutting distance)

1 KYU

Good Kirikaeshi, fluidty of movement, good Uchimaai.

Keiko, Kihon with Ki-Ken-tai no ichi and use of Zanshin.

Understanding and use of Maai.

Good Reigi-saho

Kendo no kata 1.2.3 with good kamae and without mistakes.

DAN GRADES

SHODAN

Remember the basics, at the grading it is important that you have acquired the following:

Shisei     Body form
Kamae      Distance with shinai
Kiai       Shout or yell

SHISEI

Although you can acquire Shisei through constant practice it takes time, the minimum requirement is a straight back and good stance.

CHUDAN NO KAMAE

This is a kamae for both attack and defence; it is the most widely used in Kendo.

A relaxed and natural chudan-no-kamae is the minimum requirement.

KIAI

A rich kiai, this naturally appears through the loud yell if you have tension and concentration in your mind.

When Tachi-nin shouts hajime it is important you already have these three, Shisei, Kamae and Kiai.
KIRIKAESHI

In many associations Kirikaeshi is a part of the test.

Kirikaeshi is a summary of the basic action, so if we look at your kirikaeshi we can judge whether you have acquired the principal or not. The basics of Kendo are all present, Shisei, Kamae, Kiai, Uchi. Strikes synchronised with Ki-Ken-Tai are trained.

You should practice Kirikaeshi according to the guidance laid down for youth training. You strike Men then strike 4 times going forward starting on the right hand side then 5 strikes going backwards. Total 9 strikes this is done twice.

FREE PRACTICE: You will now start your two practices.

This is to demonstrate your attack, spirit, ability to sustain the fighting posture and show the depth of your practice. The point of 1st Dan is to have two or three telling strikes. Some people only defend themselves. If you do not strike you will not pass.

It is essential that cut has Ki-Ken-Tai. In Kendo, Shomen-Uchi is the basic of basics. Men-Uchi with a firm step and broad swing is important but not only a single Shomen also Kote-Men-Men-Men. (That is to say Nidan Waza in some form is required) (A single Kote-Uchi or Do-Uchi alone is not so impressive.)

MAAI: DISTANCE

Maai is important in the test of Shodan. Do not strike carelessly when you face your opponent; strike positively, from Chudan-no-Kamae with one step, one strike Issoku-Itto no Maai and Kiai. Especially do not waste your first strike "Hatsutachi".

Shomen-Uchi is important. Men-Uchi is a confronting action. You make your cuts according to the action from your opponent.

To summarise the point in practice, always follow the principle - With rich spirit, strike Shomen-Uchi from a positive Kamae. That strike must incorporate Ki-Ken-Tai. Before you attack be careful about Maai and strike an attacking hit.

Vary your pattern of approach and after the cut straighten yourself then turn back quickly and prepare for the next movement.

In Kendo posture and attitude are rigorously disciplined. Yours should be well demonstrated.

At first Dan at least you should strike from Issoku-Itto-no-Maai.

So what is needed for the 1st Dan:

Kiai: Whether you can raise a loud voice from your stomach
Kamae: Whether your Chudan-no-Kamae is correct and natural
Te Sabaki: Can you grip your Shinai correctly?
AshiSabaki: Can you practice your footwork correctly?
Kihon Uchi: Can you practice basic movements correctly?
Clothing: Have you got a good overall presentation?
Reigi: Whether you can execute the first and last bows correctly?

Posture/Attitude

Additional in some Associations

Kirikaeshi: Whether you can practice this broadly and correctly because all summarised factors are included in Kirikaeshi.

Requirements for SHODAN

1. Presentation
2. Posture/attitude
3. Grip of Shinai
4. Shinai position
5. Footwork
6. Distance
7. Basic Cuts
8. Kiai
9. Courtesies
10. Kirikaeshi

Kata: You are expected to know the first three sets of Kendo-no-Kata and be able to perform them to a reasonable standard without making any mistakes.

You are normally judged by the proportion of one Kirikaeshi, two practices and Kata.

At first dan level in Japan the percentage of passes are 60%.

NIDAN

Shikake-Waza

Not only whether you can attack and produce accurate cuts but also whether you can produce two or three consecutive WAZA.

Example: HARAI-MEN TAIATARI HIKI-KOTE etc.

In Kendo there are basic WAZA and advanced WAZA, and in the advanced WAZA there are SHIKAKE-WAZA and OJI-WAZA.

SHIKAKE WAZA:

Is to attack your opponent, you start the attack.

DEGASHIRA WAZA:

This is when you strike your opponent when he/she starts to make a move, such as MEN and KOTE.

HIKIATAMA WAZA:

Is to attack your opponent when he or she pulls back there head such as MEN or KOTE.
HARAI WAZA:

Is to break the control of the SHINAI of the person taking the posture CHUDAN NO KAME by striking this unguarded point and breaking the posture with a WAZA such as HARAI-MEN, HARAI-KOTE, etc. There are many ways of hitting away your opponents SHINAI for example upside and downside to the right and left. Also there are consecutive techniques, these are called RENZOKU-WAZA, from KOTE to MEN, from MEN to MEN and so on, these are NIJJAN UCHI, footwork and body movement are important. This is also true in SAN-DAN WAZA or SANDAN UCHI KOTE to MEN to MEN, from KOTE to MEN and DO. HIKI-WAZA is the waza that is used when you get very close to your opponent you produce a strike by pulling yourself back, an accurate strike as well as the footwork and body movement are important, etc.

HIKI-MEN, HIKI-KOTE, HIKI-DO and MEN-TAIATARI-HIKI-DO, MEN-TAIATARI-HIKI-MEN. The last to use TAIATARI this is when you attack your opponents MEN and then follow in with a body check from the hips then pull yourself back by producing a strike to an open target.

Oji WAZA:

In OJI-WAZA there are three basic WAZA,

NUKI-WAZA

KAESHII-WAZA

SURIAGE-WAZA

And there are lots of varieties within these here are some to think about. MEN-NUKI-MEN, MEN-NUKI-DO, KOTE-NUKI-MEN. MEN-KAESHII-MEN, MEN-KAESHII-DO, MEN-KAESHII-KOTE. MEN-SURIAGE-MEN, MEN-SURIAGE-DO, MEN-SURIAGE-KOTE.

The above are all basic movements; OJI-WAZA requires the skills of distance with your opponent, footwork and body movement. You will need to acquire these skills through repeated practice in the process of the pursuit of kendo.

Vigour. Force

Concentration and tension in the mind, with a KIAI which comes up from your stomach and appears to be filled with vigour. This can only be acquired naturally through the process of pursuit but you need more depth in force and vigour than was demanded for SHODAN.

Chance for the Strike

Kendo is a confronting action and a fight, so a clash of two minds who are watching for a chance to strike. So the clash of two becomes even and both of you can not make an effective strike. There are many chances for an attack which can be recalled from past encounters, but there are three definite chances, in other words you must strike with these chances which are:

1. WHEN YOUR OPPONENT TRIES TO MAKE A MOVE
2. WHEN YOUR OPPONENT CEASES HIS ATTACK
3. WHEN YOUR OPPONENT RECEIVES YOUR ATTACK.

Taking these chances and striking straight is not easy in kendo unless you have trained hard in the pursuit of understanding kendo.
Maai

MAAI is the life of Kendo, there is far distance, close and one step distance. There is more advanced MAAI, this is the minds MAAI, not only the distance, MAAI, between you and your opponent but also MINDS MAAI is important. There is no other way to pursue this except practice.

Quote

"FAR FROM YOUR OPPONENT BUT NEAR TO YOU."

This looks inconsistent, but it is not, it is hidden in reality, this is the depth of Kendo.

Kirikaeshi

As we mentioned before, a lot of Associations include KIRIKAESHI for the exam, but NIDAN KIRIKAESHI should be broad, quick, strong and light which is different from SHODAN. It is important that it should get closer to the real form of KIRIKAESHI.

Requirements for NIDAN

1. SHIKAKE WAZA  
2. OJI WAZA  
3. VIGOUR, FORCE, KIAI  
4. CHANCE FOR THE STRIKE  
5. MAAI AT A MORE ADVANCED LEVEL  
6. KIRIKAESHI AT A MORE ADVANCED LEVEL

The point of demonstration in NIDAN is these factors are added, so the daily practice gets more and more important. You must practice hard so as to be able to produce these WAZA under any circumstances, naturally.

The differences already mentioned before between Shodan to Nidan are the same as those between Nidan to Sandan, it is only the depth of process of pursuit of Kendo which is at a more advanced stage.

If we look at this from a different angle, summarising the options of many sensei, a very clear point emerges:

People, who take the test Sandan, from the point of Kendo history, should have been practising Kendo more than 3 or 4 years. So their pursuit must be brushed up. However, from the stage of Nidan to Sandan, there seems to be a wall at Sandan.

The 1st and 2nd Dan grades are the most basic stages in Kendo, the importance is the basis itself in the same confronting movements. At the stage of 3rd Dan the importance moves to the DEPTH of the confronting action which stands on the basis and form of Kendo through action.

Therefore you are required to have a high understanding which is not required in first and second dan.
SANDAN

The Target of Pursuit in Kendo

The aim should be decided, each step to attain that aim should always be successive. Even if you start at same point in Kendo, if you mistake the aim of pursuit the process of pursuit itself derails and every stage which should be learnt piles up and will not be successive, which it should be. In a nutshell your progress stops. So it is important that the instructor and the student co-operate and go on the same orbit towards the aim. A little difference at the starting point of the aim of Kendo makes a big difference during the long Journey in Kendo. 3rd Dan is considered to be a wall in the way of the pursuit of Kendo.

1 THE CHANCE FOR THE STRIKE IN AN EARLIER OR LATER ATTACK

At second Dan, the chance for the strike is an important element. At third Dan it is mentioned as well, the chance for the strike at third Dan gets much deeper and you need it to foresee your opponent’s moves.

In the case of second dan, we mentioned three definite changes for the strike:

When your opponent tries to make a move
When your opponent ceases their waza.
When your opponent receives your strike.
But there are more chances for the strike:
An unguarded point of your opponent.
When your opponent stops moving.
When your opponent shows surprise and doubt in his mind.
At an unguarded point in your opponents movement for the strike.
Therefore, the chances to attack increase so do not miss them. Produce the strike.

PRACTISE A LOT AND ACQUIRE A MIND WHICH CAN FORESEE THIS POINT.

Whether an earlier or later chance occurs you must be able to produce waza like SHIKAKE and OJI that can react to your opponent’s variety. These should be more practised and varied than of a second Dan

VARIETY OF SHIKAKE WAZA

HARAI, KATSUGI, HIKI, NIDANDSANDAN, DEBANA, KATATE.

IN OJI WAZA

SURIAGE, UCHIOTOSHI, KAESHI, NUKI.

As these SHIKAKE and OJI waza get more varied and complicated, as with any advanced technique, you need further and deeper practice.
The chance for a strike as mentioned occurs at every possible unguarded point from your opponent. To see this is the first step of confronting a match, learning this can be experienced by thorough practise with many people.

However, in the precepts of KEN (sword) it says:

QUOTE:

"There are two ways to get to the stage of progressing. Some people get to it from the theory, some people get to it from practice, which ever way they go it is good. People who get to it from theory improve quicker, people get to it from practice improve slower !!".

To attain the stage of improvement there are wide bands of slowness and quickness. Therefore, after you taste the theory and think, you practice; after you practice you think the theory, by this you have to practice hard.

The theory and practice are like the two sets of wheels on a car. If you pursue the theory and the practice together every day and night, without idleness, the ten years pursuit would finish in five years and you will be at the stage of expert and master.

AT THIS STEP,

THE INSTRUCTION THAT IS MENTIONED HERE IS THE INSTRUCTION WHICH REALLY HAS MEANING, AND IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU FOLLOW THIS INSTRUCTION IN YOUR PRACTICE.

2 The Strike Which Has an Attack (SEME)

The strike which has an attack is not a simple exchange strike it is to attack your opponent before you strike him. These are attacks of the sword and attacks of the mind. By attacking your opponent you force him into an unguarded point and strike it. It is not a win by striking, but a strike by winning. A strike by winning is to strike by winning through attacking. This strike is a reasonable strike. There is no waste in this strike and it has reason. A simple strike would not easily become an effective strike though there may be an attack of the sword and attack of the spirit in the movement.

Kendo in which the match finishes in a moment in alternate offence and defence with the opponent, the attack becomes the important point. An attack of the sword appears especially at the tip of the sword. That is why it is said that there is a free choice to make, live or die, in the tip of the sword. If there is not an attack in the tip of the sword, the strike becomes dead and this will result in your being hit.

"By the sword you oppress your opponent; by the movement of the sword you force your opponent into an unguarded point. An attack of the spirit is by the concentration and richness of the mind. The spirit emerges."

Being able to raise your voice is also from the richness of your spirit (KIAI). The mind which would not be afraid of anything puts a big pressure on your opponent and forces your opponent into the unguarded points of his mind. This spirited attack is very important in Kendo.
3 Distance (MAAI)

As you progress it becomes important how you take MAAI and how you use it. In MAAI there are the basic three distances:

ISSOKU ITTO NO MAAI, TOI MAAI, CHIKAI MAAI

But even in these MAAI each individual is a little different. So as you acquire your own MAAI learn to use others to your advantage with your own minds MAAI.

4 Effective Strike

At third Dan you need an effective strike that becomes IPPON. At the first and 2nd Dan stages you needed the accurate strike and the basic strike. At 3rd Dan you require that the strike becomes an effective strike against your opponent. The strike which becomes IPPON is, in Kendo match regulations, to strike DATOTSUBU (the striking parts) correctly by DATOTSUBU of your SHINAI with rich vigour and proper posture.

Strike DATOTSUBU by DATSUBU: This is the other side of the TSURU (string) the top on third of the total length of the SHINAI which would be to strike correctly by the cutting edge of the sword. It must be the strike which is united with KI-KEN-TAI. During practice of the grading you will be required to get between three and five effective strikes.

5 Posture, Attitude

At third Dan the posture should be closed to perfection, the stance of the feet, a stable straight back and the focus of the eyes.

Your attitude should be grand, showing respect to your opponent, it relates to a moderate REIHO (courtesy).

6 Spirit

We explained about spirit in the previous point of attack, but you need to add more strength and severity. Also it is important to understand that these become the points that is the depth of acquiring RENZOKU-WAZA (consecutive techniques), as an instructor the depth of acquiring the basic technique, dignity, necessity of ZANSHIN.

7 Zanshin

Zanshin has always been very important in Kendo. Recently in the regulation of a Kendo match, the strike which does not have ZANSHIN is cancelled, even after the effective strike.

So it is essential that after the strike you immediately prepare the physical and mental posture against your opponent. The strike without ZANSHIN does not become an effective strike. So you should not just strike and pull yourself back. You should keep the spirit moving.
Requirements for SANDAN

1. THE CHANCE FOR THE STRIKE
2. THE STRIKE WHICH HAS AN ATTACK
3. USE OF MAAI
4. EFFECTIVE STRIKE
5. POSTURE ATTITUDE
6. SPIRIT
7. PREPARATION FOR THE NEXT MOVEMENT (ZANSHIN)

YONDAN

The difference between third and fourth Dan

In the third Dan section we described the difference between second and third Dan according to the survey from some Sensei who actually participate in testing in some countries, we can see clear differences from its summary:

At third Dan

The chance for the strike if earlier and later.

The strike which has an attack.

How to use Maai.

Effective strike.

Posture Attitude.

Spirit.

Zanshin.

These are required as necessities. We omit some which are the same as Third Dan, but at fourth Dan, we can describe the following which are quite different:

Style, dignity, pride.

Posture, attitude.

Reasonable strike.

Attacking with effective Kensaki.

Capacity of an instructor.

Strength of the attack and reaction to the variations.

Zanshin.

Smart, strike and skill.
Although posture, attitude, zanshin are mentioned in 3\textsuperscript{rd} Dan, it is described here that it should be deeper and more perfect, beside many sensei especially put emphasis on the necessity of these points.

At the demonstration the following become necessary, in Kendo they are not easy to produce as they are done on the spot.

**The necessities in fourth Dan are:**

The aim is an everyday pursuit, so you have to understand that if you acquire it naturally you can give a full account of yourself during the test.

Daily practice and training are factors which decide this point.

**1 Style, Dignity and Pride**

These are the top points which many Sensei describe as they are hardly seen in 3\textsuperscript{rd} Dan, we can say they are special points in 4\textsuperscript{th} Dan. Therefore, the style, the dignity and pride of a high grade should be close to perfection.

**STYLE:** Showing the beauty of Kendo is required.

**DIGNITY AND PRIDE:** Are used with almost the same meaning but it is difficult to explain in words.

**DIGNITY:** Is the power which appears naturally by accumulating the practice of advanced techniques both physically and mentally.

**PRIDE:** You acquire it naturally as a result of training. If you try to get only a shallow form of pride you will be taken advantage of by your opponent. The grace which emanates from the inner self should overwhelm your opponent and be invaded.

**2 Posture, Attitude**

These are common to every Dan, but the point which is mentioned by a lot of sensei is that it is essential that they should be more perfect. Posture and attitude cannot be separated.

Courtesy, clothing and shinai, all are included in Posture and Attitude.

Also the posture and attitude mentioned here include that of the instructor.

As well as dignity and pride posture and attitude situates a high proportion in the condition of 4\textsuperscript{th} Dan, which is fulfilment in content and necessity of an instructor and high Dan grade. If you lack in this point it means you are not capable of 4\textsuperscript{th} Dan.

**3 Reasonable Strike**

Up to 3\textsuperscript{rd} Dan the chance for striking, maai and body movement are mentioned, by necessity and individually.

A reasonable strike is required for a high Dan grade. Whether you can produce an un-wasted strike and action, in its contents, it is essential that you must strike when there is a chance, the use of maai is essential, your footwork and body movement should be natural. Any strike should have reason. This is the Kendo where you do not produce an unnecessary movement. You do not produce a strike when it should not be made. You should also put San-satsu-ho into practical use.
4 Attack with effective KENSAKI

Though the strike which has an attack that is required in 3rd Dan, because in Kendo, it is indisputable that you strike by winning the attack. Therefore, in 4th Dan you have to pursue the attack of the sword still more than the attack.

The action of KENSAKI is very important it is said that there is a freedom to let it live or die in the top part of the sword. Unless you concentrate all your spirit into giving power to your KENSAKI and suppress your opponent, the sword becomes dead and you can be taken advantage of. From olden times it is said that it is important that the action of KENSAKI is like a water wagtail tail, that it is vibrate and force your opponent to make an unguarded point, by that, you take the advantage and attack. By the action of Kensaki you suppress your opponent and achieve a winning strike, being unnoticed your action can have a chance.

5 Capacity of an Instructor

At Fourth Dan you are regarded as an instructor. The condition of being able to instruct is that you have acquired the necessities of 1st, 2nd and 3rd Dan, that you have an advanced technique and can produce, Suriagi-Waza, Kaeshi-Waza, Uchiotoshi-Waza, Nuki-Waza, to your opponent naturally. In this capacity, whether you have acquired the theory and the style of Kendo, and more whether you can instruct young Kendoka with the right attitude. You have to pursue, Kata theory. If you have not acquired these you have not the capacity of 4th Dan.

6 Strength of the attack and the ability to react to variations of Waza

The confronting action of Kendo is that the higher Dan you become the more important it is that the attitude which you show is not perturbed. When your opponent makes a strike, you are not surprised and can use your offensive powers and ability to react to his attack without being flustered by his movement. So you can react and be able to react to any of your opponents variations of attack this is a condition of 4th Dan.

7 Zanshin

Zanshin is often mentioned by many Sensei. In Kendo Zanshin is important, everyone emphasises that Zanshin is necessary after the strike and it is not so easy to acquire naturally in real Kendo and also to practice it. The more you advanced, the more Zanshin is required not only after the strike but in every movement you make.

8 Smart strike and skill

The smart strike and skill is the barometer of the pursuit of Kendo and the accumulations of practice.

When you make a strike, the action of your arms and hands such as the swing of arms, grips, wringing action is important in Kendo, and the more you advance the more the strikes become skilful by practice. These points do not appear in the grades up to 3rd Dan. It has become clear that the difference between 3rd Dan and 4th Dan - the strong points of 4th Dan in comparison with 3rd Dan.

Above all the strong pints, the aim of the step of pursuit is not to get the Dan, but it is to emphasize the necessity of the accumulation of daily pursuit which has advanced and become deeper in these points. This is the step.
Requirements for YONDAN

1. STYLE, DIGNITY, PRIDE
2. POSTURE, ATTITUDE
3. REASONABLE STRIKE
4. ATTACK WITH EFFECTIVE KENSAKI
5. CAPACITY OF AN INSTRUCTOR
6. STRENGTH OF ATTACK AND ABILITY TO REACT TO VARIOUS WAZA
7. ZANSHIN
8. SMART STRIKE

GODAN

At Fourth Dan it is mentioned that:
Style, Dignity, Pride
Posture, Attitude with Effective Kensaki
Capacity of an Instructor
Strength of Attack and Reaction to the variations
Zanshin
Smart Strike

To have reached here you have had to accumulate the requirements for every Dan, and advanced to the higher and deeper step.

A Path from Fourth Dan to Fifth Dan

It can be said that it only takes more practice and brushing up the process so far. We can regard 5th Dan as a synthetic finish.

Sensei who have answered questionnaires mostly say that at 4th Dan conditions mentioned are the same. Even so we still are able to mention a few strong points, although there are not any changes in content only the order of the importance is changed.

This means it can be though that you have acquired Kendo and the quality of an Instructor becomes important. At 4th Dan Dignity and Pride, which is not mentioned before, and Posture Attitude are important. At 5th Dan Dignity, Pride is important.
At 5\textsuperscript{th} Dan the order of importance is:

Reasonable Strike

Dignity, Pride

Capacity of an Instructor

These, even with no change in content are very important.

The rest in order are:

Posture, Attitude

ZANSHIN

KENSAKI is active

In any strike the reasonable strike is important in Kendo. It is required that you have acquired near perfection and it is the same as if you pursue higher and deeper, it becomes reasonable. Also if you practice a lot of Dignity and Pride - which are mental elements that you can naturally acquire.

If you attain that Kendo, you, of course would acquire a capacity of an Instructor.

The one who has acquired the capacity of an Instructor must have Posture Attitude which is perfect.

These are even if you pick up any thought to be the Synthesis of the condition of 1\textsuperscript{st} to 4\textsuperscript{th} Dan.

We understand 5\textsuperscript{th} Dan to be:

You have the synthesis of every Dan perfectly during the accumulation of long practice.

\textbf{1 Reasonable Strike}

From the point of WAZA you can naturally produce SHIKAKE WAZA, OJI WAZA during the fight with your opponent, use of MAAI you never miss chance for he strike, a strike with KI-KEN-TAI you can do the footwork and move your body naturally and Zanshin after the strike is stable.

In the Reasonable Strike it is important that you have acquired these subtle techniques of Kendo.

The fight with Kensaki attack is a fight between mind and mind. By this kind of practise you put yourself in an advantage and have control, the first strike will become effective. If you think of the strike like that you can not waste even a single strike. But the strike which is off hand and lacks care does not have the confirmation of the mind attack.

The Reasonable Strike is also the main point of Kendo.

"There is no wasted action; this kind of Kendo is beautiful as a form. It is a human expression in which you can feel artistic".

Many Sensei have mention that a Reasonable Strike at 5\textsuperscript{th} Dan has to been seen at this level.
2 Dignity, Pride

As we mentioned before, we call it Dignity, Pride, Grace, Style, in many ways it is thought that in content it all means the same. Grade is explained like this in "How to Study Kendo" written by Chuzo Stato.

"for ordinary people there is a high grade and low grade Kendo, though it depends on the individual personality quite a lot. If you accumulate the pursuit of mind and body and understand the bad and good, never mind the win or lose, have a body full of energy and meet your opponent with the belief of no failure, you will have an admirable attitude and your Kendo will become of high grade. To those people who can not produce a strike of a waza as they wish even if you acquire the production of a strike, your mind and body would be daunted and you will feel oppressed."

Even the people who observe this match can notice that the person who has grade looks superior to the person who strikes a lot. A lot of people when they are practicing together, the graded person excel rather than the others. To the high grade Kendo everyone feels like taking off ones hat.

If you only imitate the style, your grade would not get higher, for this people would not feel any power or oppression at all and the body gets stiff, there would be a lot of unguarded points. Even if you would only be able to imitate the Style, it would be totally different but look the same. Therefore, to make your grade high is:

**TO PURSUE YOUR MIND, PRACTICE DAY AND NIGHT AND SECURE ITS BELIEF.**

It is described that in Kendo there is no way to make your grade higher but to practice. In 5\textsuperscript{th} Dan, there is the grade of 5\textsuperscript{th} Dan and this is what is required.

3 Capacity of an Instructor

We can say that at 5\textsuperscript{th} Dan the condition of the capacity of an Instructor gets bigger and bigger. You must have WAZA and the theory which are suitable to instruct 4\textsuperscript{th} Dan and lower, and KENDO-KATA but also you should be able to use it according to the reason. From 4\textsuperscript{th} Dan this condition of Instructor appears, but at 5\textsuperscript{th} Dan it is required to be at a more advanced step.

THESE POINTS ALREADY MENTIONED APPEAR TO BE A PRIORITY AND THE FOLLOWING POINTS ARE THE SAME AS THE CONTENTS OF THE FOURTH DAN SECTION.

**Requirements for GODAN**

1. REASONABLE STRIKE
2. DIGNITY, PRIDE
3. CAPACITY OF AN INSTRUCTOR
4. POSTURE, ATTITUDE
5. ZANSHIN
6. KENSAKI IS ACTIVE

But whether you can produce these in a demonstration which is of a short period of time can be understood by the fact you have to meet it with an immovable mind which has been acquired in the pursuit of the daily practice.

There is no Kendo which is for the test, so it is indispensable that you accumulate the requirements for 5\textsuperscript{th} Dan through daily practice. By doing this you can produce them.
CHECK LIST

SHODAN
Presentation, Posture, Attitude Grip of Shinai, Shinai Position, Footwork, Distance, Basic Cuts, Kiai
Courtesies

NIDAN
Shikake Waza, Oji-Waza, Vigour, Force, Kiai, Chance for the Strike, Maai more Advanced.

SANDAN
The Chance for the Strike, The strike which has an Attack, Use of Maai, Effective Strike, Posture Attitude
Spirit, Preparation for the Next Movement (Zanshin)

YONDAN
Style, Dignity, Pride, Posture, Attitude, Reasonable Strike, Attack with Effective Kensaki, Capacity of an
Instructor, Strength of Attack and Ability to react to Various Waza, Zanshin, Smart Strike

GODAN
Reasonable Strike, Dignity, Pride, Capacity of an Instructor, Posture, Attitude’ Zanshin, Kensaki is Active