

## **The Research on Contrast between Dan System of Chinese Wushu and Belt System of Karate**

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### **Abstract**

The implementation of the dan system is the great reform measures in the recent 20 years and also the main strategy of the development of Chinese wushu in the future. Comparing with belts system of Japanese karate, dan system of Chinese wushu are expected to improve and complete in many ways. Some suggestions on system, evaluation and standardization of dan system will be put forward to propagate martial arts ranking system, it provides a reference for the development of martial arts in the world, so as to promote the development of martial arts. Is also conducive to the promotion of martial arts in the world.

### **Key words**

Chinese Wushu, Karate, Rank in comparative study.

### **1. Introduction**

Chinese wushu is a historic, profound and traditional sports with mass audience and one of the excellent cultural heritage of Chinese. In order to promote the development and standardization of wushu, the General Administration of Sport officially issued and fully implement dan system of Chinese wushu nationwide in 1998 while the belts system of Karate was adapted from judo dan system in last century. Base on the generation, purpose, content and standardization building, this paper tries to analyze the differences and common points between dan system of Chinese Wushu and belts system of Karate. Combined with the implementing of dan system of Chinese wushu and the problem excited in it, this paper aims to propose

corresponding improvement measure. In this way, we can complete dan system and lay the solid foundation for the deep development of Chinese wushu.

## **2. Overview of Both Dan System of Chinese Wushu And Belts System of Karate**

### **2.1 Overview of Dan System of Chinese Wushu**

China began to selecting officers through wushu competition from Tang Dynasty. People who learned wushu was classified according to hierarchy at that time. The appearance of wushu hierarchy was greatly accelerated the development of wushu in history. After the reform and opening up, in order to promote the development of wushu, rise its level of skills and theory and establish more standard martial skill and theory system, the General Administration of Sport officially issued and fully implement dan system of Chinese wushu nationwide in 1998. The dan system of Chinese wushu emphasize upholding martial and advocating morality, which means making a balance between martial and morality. Therefore, they pay attention to both theory and skills of martial arts and even have more strict requirements on martial etiquette. This requirement not only ask candidates to be skillful at the martial level but also to achieve high level in martial theory. Since dan system of Chinese Wushu issued and implemented, especially the development and complement of Textbook of Chinese Wushu Duanwei System. Given to the release of Handbook of Chinese Wushu Duanwei System, Textbook series of Chinese Wushu Duanwei System and Ten-year planning of promotion of Wushu Duanwei System (2014-2023), evaluation of wushu ranks will improve day by day, they will promote characteristic development of Chinese wushu career.

### **2.2 Overview of Belts System of Karate**

Japanese Judo, kendo and other martial arts have been adopted ranking system before Karate. In order to keep martial training running according to certain rules, Gichin Funakoshi, the “Father of Modern Karate”, began to adopt ranking system in 1924. It was the first belts system of karate in history. This system facilitate trainer to evaluate the degree of their progress at different stages objectively and compare with peers, which promote the development and inheritance of martial arts effectively. With the increase of trainers, ranking system of Karate complete step by step. Karate used white and black belts ranks as in Judo. The ten black belt, or expert, ranks are called dan and they are called yudansha. Those who hadn't yet attained black belt ranking are called mudansha. Their levels below dan, are called

kyu. Many sects adopt green, yellow, cyan belts etc. between black belts and white belts. The degree of trainers is differentiated by colored belts. Nowadays, the most common methods to identify levels in belts system of karate is to sequence white, yellow, red, orange, blue, green, purple, brown and black belts. However, there are some differences in dan, kyu and colored belts between various sects and various areas. For instance, Chinese Karate Association adopts 10 dan and 9 Kyu ranks while Japanese Kyokushin Karate adopts 10 dan and 10 kyu ranks.

### 3. Comparison between Chinese Wushu Duanwei System and Ranking System of Karate

#### 3.1 Degree Division

Tab.1. Degree Division of Dan System and Belts System

Dan system			Belts system			
Initial Stage (dan)	Intermediate Stage (dan)	Advanced Stage (dan)	Kyu (Wudansha)	Fresh (Yudansha)	Experts	Contributors and elites
1	4	7	Jukyu	Shodan	Yodan	Shichidan
2	5	8	to	Nidan	Godan	Hachidan
3	6	9	Ikkyu	Sandan	Rokudan	Kudan Judan

We can see from the table 1, degree division of wushu is different from Karate. Dan system of Chinese wushu has initial, intermediate and advanced levels and 9 dans while Karate trainers has 4 levels and 20 degrees. This is what usually called jukyu and judan. The beginner's degree will promote from kyu to dan. Jukyu is the minimum degree and the ikkyu is the maximum degree. When the trainers are awarded ikkyu, then they can rank dan. Among dan degree, shodan is the minimum and the judan is the maximum. Compared with Wushu, Karate has a more detailed ranks system and set one more kyu as well as 11 degrees. The practice of Wudansha is focused on fundamental content and has a detailed division. It is easy for the beginner to understand. In this way, this practice boosts the interest of beginners and promote their motivation. The training and test for Wudansha attract many beginners through satisfying their sense of achievement and arousing their enterprise.

### 3.2 Awarding of Belts and Promotion

Tab.2. Limitation of Time and Age for Promotion Testing

Martial Arts Type	Wushu		Karate	
Dan	The shortest time to promote (year)	Beginning age (years old)	The shortest time to promote (year)	Beginning age (years old)
Qualification	1	8 or 13	1	
1	1	9	1	16
2	1	10	1	16
3	1	11	1	16
4	2	13	3	30
5	2	15	4	35
6	2	17	5	41
7	6	23	6	48
8	5	28	7	58
9	No limitation	No limitation	8	60
10	-	-	9	70

We can see from the table 2, the shortest time to promote for each dan of Chinese wushu is close. Time lag for promotion among initial stage is 1 year and intermediate stage is 2 years. By that analogy, we can find that people who learn wushu will be attained 9 dan above 28 years old. Generous limitation for the age of beginner have done great harm and dan system of Chinese wushu will lose its effect. Belts system of karate is different from dan system of Chinese wushu. The karate clubhouse has a promotion test every 3 months and 1 test for dan promotion every year. Trainers will not get the qualification to take part in this test for dan promotion until they are awarding ikkyu belts. Karate ranks has strict rules for the shortest time and age to promote at each dan. The trainee who is awarding shodan belts must be at least 16-year-old. He must be old enough if he wants to get promotion. Rokudan and above belts awarding must be verified by World Karate Federation. Only people devote to Karate cold be awarded these belts. Kudan and Judan are honor belts only for master who makes a great contribution to the whole Karate world.

The higher grade you get, the longer time you cost. In this way, little age trainee stay at initial stage, so the high level trainees will be more authoritative and play a more important role.

### **3.3 Testing Content for Belts Awarding**

Testing Content for dan including morality, skills and theory. But testing for fresh yudansha do not including theory. Skill testing of dan only set up for Initial stage and intermediate stage promotion. A set of boxing testing for dan admission and three sets of boxing testing for 6 dan in skill test, Chinese boxing and instrument are included. According to the skills in Textbook series of Chinese Wushu Duanwei System, test including twelve Chinese boxings: Shaolinquan, Changquan , Taijiqian that has Chen style, Yang style, He style, Wu style and Sun style(武氏和吴氏) , Xingyiquan, Baguazhang, Tongbiquan, Zhuo jiao, Fanziquan, Bajiquan, Tanglang quan, Wuzuquan and Yongchunquan. There are also three books about free style martial arts, they are Funny Wushu that for trainees haven't get dan, Textbook of Martial Arts and Textbook of Self-defense. In addition, three instrument textbooks of swordsmanship, bat and nunchaku.

All of these are the content and standard of skills test in dan system of Chinese wushu released so far. The higher grade you get, the more you test, the more difficult and the higher demand. Promotion of advanced stage will be verified in four aspects: Work achievement, research of wushu theory, scientific works and great contribution to the development of wushu.

Theory and skills are included in promotion test of karate. The skill test evaluates candidate from six aspects: Fundamental skill, kata, stamina, force, integrated skill and kumite. Skill and stamina demands will increase with the grade going up. Take test content of promotion from first grade to second grade brown belts for instance. Tasks you should finish as following: 3200 meters running within 15 minutes and adults will finish within 20 minutes in stamina test; Assault routine from Heian shodan to Heian godan in kata test; Men should finish bench press and squat eight times with barbell weighted as his own weight while other adults finish bench press and squat five times with barbell weighted as their own weight in force test; Five teenagers or three adults in a team, a round for 1 minute in kumite test. Compared with belts system of karate, routine skill test in wushu ranks system doesn't have fundamental and force test. The only routine performance is not able to reveal the true level of candidates. As for the free combat, the test in initial stage is to evaluate fundamental skill, but candidates are asked to take part in competition in promotion test to intermediate stage. Only their grade rank in admitted list they can get

promotion. It is difficult for those older trainees in intermediate stage to promote through free combat. This case is not good for promotion once candidates encounter free combat.

### **3.4 Level of Standardization in Contrast**

The dan system of Chinese wushu is a hierarchical system which the Chinese Wushu Association formulated to evaluate the professional level of wushu players and learners in 1998. This system awarded belts by evaluating candidates' qualification from 1998 to 2007 until skill system of dan system was set up in 2008. The formulation of promotion test content brought management and skill standardization, which greatly promote the popularity of wushu at home and abroad. Handbook of Chinese Wushu Duanwei System, Textbook series of Chinese Wushu Duanwei System and so on were released in 2011. Meanwhile the official website of Chinese Wushu Duanwei system was launched to establish a appraisal system of service. However, this system lagged behind belts system of karate because of late start. After decades of development, belts system of karate became more complete in belts division, etiquette standard, technical training and evaluation standard since Gichin Funakoshi issued belts system of karate according to combination of judo and kendo belts system in 1924. Its belts system is more accurate to reflect the true level of the trainees than Chinese dan system.

### **3.5 The Contrast of Social Status and Values**

The promotion of Japanese karate is much earlier than Chinese wushu though karate's history is much shorter than wushu. Especially in Europe and North America, the European Championship of karate has been held more than 40 times. The International Olympic Committee voted through proposals on the new project at the Tokyo Olympics 2020 in August, 2016. The karate competition was one one the list of the official event. Japanese karate left Chinese wushu far behind on the worldwide promotion. Compared with the rich content and difficulty of wushu, the technical threshold of karate is much lower and introduction is easier. In addition, highlight of etiquette is also what Chinese sports wushu lack. So Karate is more popular with teenagers. Belts system plays a very important role in the development of karate. Karate belts system attracted great attention from government since its issue. The government continues to make it perfect, improve its values and wholly embellish it. The belts system attracts many trainees and swept around the world. Although has a rapid growth, dan system of Chinese wushu exists in name only because of disadvantaged status, incomplete system and insufficient promotion. The test in karate belts system is very strict, apart from skill and power test, moral and cultural test are also

included. This hierarchical system ensures the quality of teaching at all levels from junior to senior. Karate became not only competitive, technical and artistic, but also cultural and academic. Chinese wushu also try to strengthened connotation of Chinese traditional culture in its Dan system since this system was released. This system also had test requirement on martial virtue that including Chinese classical philosophy and the Taoist thought. The Dan system of Chinese wushu is expected to complete, develop, and to encourage the trainees to make progress continually. Meanwhile, this system is supposed to play a crucial role in wushu promotion all around the world.

## **4. Wushu Promotion**

### **4.1 Increasing Grade and Ways to Promotion**

Dan system of Chinese wushu and belts system of karate both have their separate content and evaluation system. They are both representatives with oriental philosophy of eastern strike technology. Chinese culture is diverse and complex while Japanese culture is relatively sample though it was greatly influenced by Chinese culture in early period. In this case, so they revealed differently in many ways. But wushu and karate have many points in common on the way to internationalization, development pattern is worth drawing lesson from belts system of karate. The prospective developing tendency of dan system of wushu is asked to reform and innovate constantly according to the characteristic of wushu. Only when dan system and wushu supplement each other, they are able to play the impotent roles.

Trainees promote from jukyu to ikkyu, shodan to judan in karate belts system. Difficulty of every level doesn't appear to be much different from next level. You are capable to promote higher level if you master the skills demanded currently. Trainees are aroused strongly by successive objectives with more spaces above in belts system to move up. In contrast, wushu has three grades before they are approved to get Dan awarding. And the degree of difficulties vary from 1 Dan to 9 Dan dramatically. Demands of skills and achievement in every grade is relatively high. The encouragement from objectives is not as strong as karate does. Because there is less space to move up. There are three grades before ranks in wushu. It is expected to increase some grades like Karate to test fundamental skills. They had better to add force test in promotion test to appear that wushu is also a martial art combining practice and fight. The difficulty of force test in different grade should be progressive and the content of force test should be match with skills in related belts. All of these measures urge trainees to focus on the practice of basic skill and force.

In addition, grass-root organization and social martial organization including general schools that offer martial arts courses are supposed to authorized to hold test even set up second-lever or third-level test organization. In this way, tests from 1 dan to 3 dan are held by grass-root organization and social martial organization. Tests from 4 dan to 6 dan are held by provincial-level Wushu Association. Tests from 7 dan to 9 dan are held by Wushu Administrative Center. To promote and expand grass-roots rank in martial arts promotion, increase the number of annual examination will help to arouse trainees' enthusiasm, which is benefit to the promotion and internationalization of dan system.

## **4.2 Promoting the Position of Dan System Served as Martial Arts Sport Evaluation System**

Karate belts system is complete and clear. The definite evaluation standard is popular and easy to understand. It reveals trainees' level clearly. But dan system of wushu has a complex permitting process, vague level line, nonstandard ranks, overmuch target audience and weak control in its initial stage. As a result, It is not widely recognized and respected by Chinese people. Even the wushu trainees don't pay much attention to evaluation and promotion. Although keep moving forward on the road to development in recent 20 years, dan system is not promote vigorously as a standard evaluation system. It is not total accepted by general trainees and seeks no use to them. Administrative department ought to promote wushu, rise its status and speed up the research of responses. By means of implement dan system widely, they can accelerate the development.

## **4.3 Improving the Level of Refinement, Standardization and Normalization**

There are various kinds of boxing styles and sects in Chinese wushu. Every boxing style has its own skill and cultural system. It must be questioned by wushu colleagues if the same standard is used to evaluate different boxing styles. The true level in different boxing style should be evaluated by corresponding evaluation standard. In addition, it will be more in line with international practice to name dan system after boxing style instead of Chinese wushu. Actually, someone is awarded dan in Chinese wushu system don't means he or she achieves corresponding level in Chinese wushu field. People who don't know Chinese wushu will misunderstand this fact

if ranks system is named Dan system of Chinese wushu inaccurately. So it is more exact to explain classification of dan system when dan system is named different boxing style with combination of tradition wushu and modern wushu. This change will be conducive to publicity and internationalization of dan system of Chinese Wushu.

## **Conclusion**

On May 6, 2014, the general administration of sport of China issued the "Ten-year planning of promotion of Wushu Duanwei System" was a mark of the promotion of dan system of Chinese wushu into an important period. Since then, dan system is implement at home and abroad as a positive measure. The system is introduced in school, communities, towns, enterprises, governments and military camps in domestic while in Confucius Institutes, International Martial Arts Kung-fu Federation and foreign office overseas. Three introductions at home and six introductions abroad are difficult tasks. The promotion of dan system of Chinese wushu is series of works. Every step needs the joint efforts of wushu circles. To complete the system, gear to international standard, prompt the system in a scale and standardized approach will make a difference to the promotion and development of the dan system of Chinese wushu.

In the future, similar papers [13-14] will be applied to enterprise and schools. Use simulate technology to evaluate the development and improvement or Wushu. However, to keep the unity of this study, full results will be published in a further study.

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