



# Nederlandse Federatie voor Krijgskunsten

## Chinese Internal Martial Arts

### Ji and Duan System

#### Chinese Internal Martial Arts

Many of the great Chinese Internal Martial Art Masters adhered to an unwritten training protocol of cross training in the three Arts (Xingyiquan, Baguazhang and Taijiquan). Many text sources (and urban legends) state that the practitioners of these arts highly respected their peers who practiced the other arts. The most contemporary example of this would be Sun Lutang (1860-1933). It is based on Sun Lutang's example, that knowledge in of all three Arts are required in order to progress through to the higher duan levels.

The Chinese Internal Martial Arts of Baguazhang, Taijiquan, and Xingyiquan, are considered a single 'domain' at the NFK. From the fourth duan and up, progression is all about the physical application of 'fa jin'. Having a clear mental concept of fa jin is not the same as being able to use it in martial situations. At the highest levels of all three Arts, the practitioner will find that there are more similarities between them than there are differences. Hence, the NFK system for the Chinese Internal Martial Arts (CIMA) is based on the three sister Arts and together they form the training domain.

The motivation behind the training domain is to help the practitioner develop a tactical vocabulary that can be found at the core of the three Arts. Traditionally, these Arts were trained to be effective in self-defense and other martial situations. If you look into the Taijiquan community today, you will notice that the focus is on health and general well-being of the practitioner. While this is not a bad thing, it does have the result of slowly removing the martial effectiveness of Taijiquan. Xingyiquan and Baguazhang, on the other hand, still retain much of their martial effectiveness but are not as popular as Taijiquan and are slowly being forgotten.

Another problem with the Arts is that there is no clear way on how to become a 'master'. Traditionally, a student finds his or herself a martial arts school and falls under the tutelage of the teacher (the Master). After many years of training, the teacher will promote the student to 'master' status. This is why lineage is very important. Unfortunately, this system does not function well in this day and age. It also lacks a systematic and scientific method of training and examination. In days of old, one's skill was settled by a 'boxing' match between the two pugilists. The winner was the master and the loser was inferior. Many kung fu movie plots have been based on this concept.

The examination criteria of the CIMA has been aligned to the other major martial arts styles, with the goal of professionalizing the system and to provide the practitioner with a clear path of progression in the CIMA. The CIMA training goals are as follows:

- Provide the practitioner with a clear training path in the three Arts from at the elementary and advanced levels.
- Ensure that the practitioner is well versed in the technical specifics of all three Arts in order to promote and preserve them for future generations.
- Provide the advanced practitioner with a specific training path in each style, with the possibility to attain a masters grade (Duan).



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- Provide the lower Duan holders the possibility to advance into the higher realms of mastery (3<sup>rd</sup> Duan and higher).



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#### General Prerequisites Ji System

The purpose of the Ji system is to help the Chinese Internal Martial Arts practitioner in his or her growth in the mastery of the Chinese Internal Martial Arts, in addition to help prepare them for their first Duan examination. The Ji examinations are performed by the head trainer at the school where the practitioner is a member of. No exam certificates will be issued. The head trainer will mark the Ji level off in the examinee's NFK passport.

In order to participate in a Ji examination, the practitioner must meet the following prerequisites:

- He or she is a personal member of the NFK and the school that he or she is a member of is also member of the NFK.
- He or she has ready knowledge concerning the history, forms and stratagems of the style(s) practiced.
- He or she has read the NFK Chinese Internal Martial Arts Ethics and Standards document.
- There are no age requirements for Ji levels.
- The examinee is expected to have sufficient knowledge of all aspects of the style for the specific Ji level.
- The examinee will provide for his or her own sparring partners and equipment (gloves, mouth piece, shin protection and protective cup).
- The exam is either pass or fail. In the event of failure, the examinee can retake the exam no earlier than six months after the initial examination.
  - A failure in one section results in an overall failure. The examinee is only required to retake the failed portions of his or her exam.
  - Failure to pass the failed sections on the second try results in taking the entire exam over at a date no earlier than six months from the exam date.

In order to qualify for the first Duan examination, the examinee must have attained the first Ji grade at least one year prior to the first Duan examination date. It is possible to petition the Technical Committee for dispensation of this requirement (see the Duan section for more information).



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#### The Ji Levels

The Ji levels start at the 6<sup>th</sup> Ji and end with the 1<sup>st</sup> Ji, where the 6<sup>th</sup> Ji is the lowest level and the 1<sup>st</sup> Ji is the highest level. The examinee is to show his or her proficiency in the respective style, in accordance to the specifics listed below. The following criteria applies to the three CIMA Styles: Taijiquan, Baguazhang and Xingyiquan

#### *The Examination Standards of 6<sup>th</sup> Ji (Belt Color: White)*

- He or she must accurately perform the following basic techniques in one the three styles:
  - Punching (with the fist)
  - Strikes (with the palm/open hand)
  - Kicks
  - Blocks

#### *The Examination Standards of 5<sup>th</sup> Ji (Belt Color: Yellow)*

- He or she must accurately perform the following stepping techniques of one the three styles:
  - Stepping Drills
    - Xingyi Stepping
    - Bagua Circle Stepping
    - Taiji Cat Walking

#### *The Examination Standards of 4<sup>th</sup> Ji (Belt Color: Orange)*

- He or she must accurately perform the following techniques of one of the three styles:
  - Xingyiquan (Five Elements)
  - Baguazhang (Palm Sets 1 and 2 , left and right sides)
  - Taijiquan (Postures 1 through 6 of the 24 Posture form)

#### *The Examination Standards of 3<sup>rd</sup> Ji (Belt Color: Green)*

- He or she must accurately perform the following techniques of one the three styles:
  - Xingyiquan (12 Animal Forms)
  - Baguazhang (Palm Sets 1, 2, 3, and 4, left and right sides)
  - Taijiquan (Postures 7 through 12 of the 24 Posture form)
- He or she must participate in the following sparring activities:
  - One 30 second round against a single opponent

#### *The Examination Standards of 2<sup>nd</sup> Ji (Belt Color: Blue)*

- He or she must accurately perform the following techniques of one of the three styles:
  - Xingyiquan (Long Forms)
  - Baguazhang (Palm Sets 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6, left and right sides)
  - Taijiquan (Postures 13 through 18 of the 24 Posture form)



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- He or she must participate in the following sparring activities:
  - two 30 second rounds against a single opponent

#### *The Examination Standards of 1<sup>st</sup> Ji (Belt Color: Brown)*

- He or she must accurately perform the following techniques of one of the three styles:
  - Xingyiquan (5 Element, 12 Animal and the Long Form)
  - Baguazhang (Palm Sets 1 through 8, left and right sides)
  - Taijiquan (Entire 24 Posture form)
- He or she must participate in the following sparring activities:
  - Two 30 second rounds against a single opponent
  - One 30 second round against two opponents



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The purpose of the Duan examinations is to help the practitioner in his or her growth in the mastery of the Chinese Internal Martial Arts. Duan candidates are expected to attain mastery in Xingyiquan, Baguazhang and Taijiquan.

The first Duan examination is done in only one of the Arts. The practitioner has two choices for the second Duan examination, namely:

- A second Duan examination in the same Art
- A second Duan examination in one of the other remaining two Arts

It is possible to have a second Duan in either Xingyiquan, Baguazhang or Taijiquan. There are no third Duan offerings in these styles; the focus of the higher Duan levels is the CIMA domain.

In order to reach the higher Duan levels (third Duan and higher), the examinee must be able to perform in all three Arts from the third Duan examination. This is the core of the CIMA domain concept and is to ensure that the examinee has a rich background in the three Chinese Internal Martial Arts and able to promote these arts to a broader audience.

In order to qualify for a Duan examination, the examinee must meet the following prerequisites:

- He or she is a personal member of the NFK and the school that he or she is a member of is also member of the NFK.
- He or she has submitted the 'Duan Examination Request' form before June 1<sup>st</sup>, at least 12 months prior to the examination date. Examinations are held each year at the end of June (actual date is determined by the Technical Committee). This form can be requested via email from the Technical Committee.
- Dispensation of the lower Duan (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>) can be requested via email from the Technical Committee. The examinee is required to fill in the 'Lower Duan Dispensation Request' form and submit this form to the Technical Committee. The individual's request will be evaluated and if the person in question meets the examination prerequisites, he or she will be allowed to take the examination without having to meet the 1<sup>st</sup> Ji requirements.
- He or she has ready knowledge concerning the history, forms and stratagems of the style(s) practiced.
- He or she has had an initial briefing from the Technical Committee on how the exam will be conducted and what is expected of the examinee.
- He or she has read the NFK Chinese Internal Martial Arts Ethics and Standards document.
- He or she will wear a uniform as prescribed by their own school.
- He or she must be at least 17 years of age by the examination date.
- The exams are divided into the following six sections:
  - Traditional Forms
  - Techniques and application of fa jin



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- Traditional Weapons & Forms
- Sparring (with protective equipment)
- Weapons Defense
- Martial Arts Theory
- The examination committee can ask the examinee to perform all of the style's forms or a subset of them. The choice is at the committee's discretion. The examinee is expected to have knowledge of all aspects of the style.
- The examinee will provide for his or her own sparring partners and protective equipment (gloves, mouth piece, shin protection and protective cup).
- The exam is either pass or fail. In the event of failure, the examinee will confer with the examination committee on the next possible exam date.
  - A failure in one section results in an overall failure. The examinee is only required to retake the failed portions of his or her exam.
  - Failure to pass the failed sections on the second try results in taking the entire exam over at the next official exam date.



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#### The Lower-Level Duan

The Lower-Level Duan are the first, second and third Duan. The examinee is to show his or her proficiency in the style, in accordance with the six sections stated afore. The first Duan concerns itself with only one of the three Chinese Internal Martial Arts. The second Duan requires that the examinee has mastered two of the three styles. The third Duan requires that the examinee is thoroughly versed in all three of the styles.

The examinee must prove that he or she can defend against an assailant. The freeform defense routines will demonstrate the examinee's martial capabilities and his or her ability to deal with self defense situations.

An examinee can request to take either the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> duan exam if they have sufficient training experience and can meet all of the duan requirements listed below, with the exception of having to have a specific ji or duan grade required for the examination. The examinee is required to submit a Lower Duan Dispensation Request form, on which exam is to be taken to the Technical Committee. The Technical Committee will then decide if the individual has sufficient background to take the requested exam.

#### *The Examination Standards of 1st Duan (Belt Color: Black)*

- He or she has obtained the 1<sup>st</sup> Ji for at least one year prior to the Duan examination date.
- He or she must accurately perform the traditional forms of one of the following styles:
  - For Xingyiquan:
    - Five Element Fists
    - 12 Animal Form
  - For Baguazhang
    - Eight Palms Long Form (Left & Right sides)
  - For Taijiquan
    - Taijiquan 48 Posture Form
- He or she must participate in the following sparring activities:
  - Two 30 second round against a single opponent
  - One 60 second round against two opponents
- He or she must be able to defend themselves (without the use of weapons) against the following freeform attacks:
  - Unarmed Assault
    - Frontal attack (1 variations)
    - Attack from behind (1 variations)
  - Armed Assault (weapon attack with knife or stick)
    - Frontal attack (1 variations)
    - Attack from behind (1 variations)
- He or she must be able to provide an answer to any theoretical or abstract question concerning a topic that relates to any aspect of the style.





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#### *The Examination Standards of 2nd Duan (Belt Color: Black)*

- He or she has obtained the 1<sup>st</sup> Duan for at least one year prior to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Duan examination date.
- He or she must accurately perform the traditional forms of two of the following styles:
  - For Xingyiquan:
    - Long Form
  - For Baguazhang
    - Eight Palms Shortened Form (Alternate Left & Right palms)
  - For Taijiquan
    - Taiji Xiao Jia Form
  - Basic Pushing Hands
- He or she must participate in the following sparring activities:
  - Two 60 second round against a single opponent
  - Two 60 second round against two opponents
- He or she must be able to defend themselves (without the use of weapons) against the following freeform attacks:
  - Unarmed Assault
    - Frontal attack (2 variations)
    - Attack from behind (2 variations)
  - Armed Assault (weapon attack with knife or stick):
    - Frontal attack (2 variations)
    - Attack from behind (2 variations)
- He or she must be able to provide an answer to any theoretical or abstract question concerning a topic that relates to any comparison of the two styles the examinee has trained in.

#### *The Examination Standards of 3rd Duan (Belt Color: Black)*

- He or she has obtained the 2<sup>nd</sup> Duan for at least one year prior to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Duan examination date.
- He or she must accurately perform the traditional forms of all of the following styles
  - For Xingyiquan:
    - Five Element Fists
    - 12 Animal Form
    - Long Form
  - For Baguazhang
    - Eight Palms Long Form (Left & Right sides)
    - Eight Palms Shortened Form (Alternate Left & Right palms)
  - For Taijiquan
    - Taijiquan 48 Posture Form
    - Taiji Xiao Jia Form
  - Basic Pushing Hands



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- He or she must explain basic information pertaining to the handling and use of at least two of the following traditional weapons, to include accurately applying the weapon in a traditional form of each style:
  - Taiji sword (jian)
  - Taiji saber (dao)
  - Taiji staff (gun)
- He or she must participate in the following sparring activities:
  - Three 60 second round against a single opponent
  - One 60 second round against two opponents
- He or she must be able to defend themselves (without the use of weapons) against the following freeform attacks:
  - Unarmed Assault
    - Frontal attack (3 variations)
    - Attack from behind (3 variations)
  - Armed Assault (weapon attack with knife or stick)
    - Frontal attack (3 variations)
    - Attack from behind (3 variations)
- He or she must be able to provide an answer concerning any theoretical or abstract questions concerning any topics that relate to any comparison of all the three styles examinee has trained in.



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#### The Mid-Level Duan

The Mid-Level Duan are the fourth, fifth and sixth Duan. The examinee is expected to show superior knowledge in each of the three styles. Superior knowledge is understood to be actual physical application of Fa Jin in various forms of execution and the ability to explain the respective forms and their training purpose.

In addition to this, the examinee must have at least 10 years of teaching experience in at least one of the three respective styles in order to qualify in taking any of the Mid-Level Duan exams.

#### *The Examination Standards of 4th Duan (Belt Color: Black)*

- He or she has obtained the 3<sup>rd</sup> Duan for at least two years prior to the 4<sup>th</sup> Duan examination date
- He or she must explain and demonstrate the following forms of Fa Jin from a fixed position:
  - Pushing Fa Jin (two hands)
  - Striking Fa Jin (fixed step)
    - Punching
      - Straight
      - Cross
    - Kicking Fa Jin (Knees & Feet)
- He or she must demonstrate the application of basic push Fa Jin with the hands
- He or she must demonstrate proficiency in Pushing Hands whilst moving and stepping
- He or she must be able to provide an answer to any theoretical or abstract question concerning any topic that relates to any aspect of all of the styles

#### *The Examination Standards of 5th Duan (Belt Color: Black)*

- He or she has obtained the 4<sup>th</sup> Duan for at least three years prior to the 5<sup>th</sup> Duan examination date
- He or she must explain and demonstrate the following forms of Fa Jin from a fixed and moving step:
  - Pushing Fa Jin
  - Striking Fa Jin (Forward and Backward)
    - Punching
      - Straight
      - Cross
      - Downwards
    - Palm (single hand)
    - Kicking Fa Jin (Knees & Feet)
- He or she must demonstrate the application of Fa Jin with all of the above body parts.
- He or she must demonstrate exceptional proficiency in Pushing Hands, apply the pushing fa jin technique against the opponent while moving.
- He or she must be able to provide an answer to any theoretical or abstract question concerning any topic that relates to any aspect of all of the styles



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#### *The Examination Standards of 6th Duan (Belt Color: Red with White Stripes)*

- He or she has obtained the 5<sup>th</sup> Duan for at least three years prior to the 6<sup>th</sup> Duan examination date
- He or she must explain and demonstrate the following forms of Fa Jin from a fixed and moving positions:
  - Pushing Fa Jin
  - Striking Fa Jin (Forward and Backward)
    - Punching
      - Straight
      - Cross
      - Downwards
      - Hook
    - Palms and Elbows
  - Kicking Fa Jin
    - Knees & Feet
- He or she must demonstrate the application of explosive Fa Jin with any striking body part
- He or she must show mastery of Pushing Hands from moving positions and can apply all the pushing hands techniques against the opponent
- He or she must be able to provide an answer to multiple theoretical or abstract questions concerning any topic that relates to any aspect of all of the styles



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#### The Upper-Level Duan

The Upper-Level Duan are the seventh, eighth and ninth Duan. The examinee must have mastered both the technical application and the theory behind each of the three Chinese Internal Martial Arts. The nature of the exam is theoretical, but the examinee can be expected to demonstrate his or her point of view during the course of the examination.

In addition to this, the examinee must have at least 20 years of teaching experience in at least one of the three respective styles in order to qualify in taking any of the Upper-Level Duan exams

#### *The Examination Standards of 7th Duan (Belt Color: Red with White Stripes)*

- He or she has obtained the 6<sup>th</sup> Duan for at least five years prior to the 7<sup>th</sup> Duan examination date
- He or she must be at least 45 years of age prior to the 7<sup>th</sup> Duan examination date.
- He or she must show superior knowledge of all three styles in the following categories:
  - The knowledge of Jin in Internal Martial Arts
  - Application of Fa Jin in its execution
  - Knowledge of the history of the styles
  - the ability to explain the forms and their applications
- He or she must have published at least two articles concerning one or more of the three styles in a Martial Arts journal or (online) magazine
- The examinee must have published at least one video (available via dvd or internet) concerning one of the three styles.

#### *The Examination Standards of 8th Duan (Belt Color: Red with White Stripes)*

- He or she has obtained the 7<sup>th</sup> Duan for at least seven years prior to the 8<sup>th</sup> Duan examination date
- He or she must be at least 52 years of age prior to the 7<sup>th</sup> Duan examination date.
- He or she must show superior knowledge of all three styles in the following categories:
  - Application of Fa Jin in its execution
  - Knowledge of the history of the styles
  - the ability to delineate forms and their meanings
- He or she must have published at least four articles concerning one or more of the three styles in a Martial Arts journal or (online) magazine
- The examinee must have published at least two videos (available via dvd or internet) concerning two of the three styles.

#### *The Examination Standards of 9th Duan (Belt Color: Red)*

- He or she has obtained the 8<sup>th</sup> Duan for at least eight years prior to the 9<sup>th</sup> Duan examination date
- He or she must be at least 60 years of age prior to the 8<sup>th</sup> Duan examination date.
- He or she must show superior knowledge of all three styles in the following categories:



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- Application of Fa Jin in its execution
- Knowledge of the history of the styles
- the ability to explain the forms and their applications
- He or she must have published at least six articles concerning one or more of the three styles in a Martial Arts journal or (online) magazine
- The examinee must have published at least three videos (available via dvd or internet) concerning all three of the styles.