

Translation of Japanese & Chinese Ranks

Compiled by Ron Rogers Hanshi

JAPANESE RANK	CHINESE RANK	JAPANESE TITLE	CHINESE TITLE
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Chi Shih, or Technician, refers to those who have learned the techniques (Chi), and are able to use them, though not necessarily well enough to apply them freely. The title Chi Shih would include four ranks: Ch'u Chi, Erh Chi, San Chi and Ssu Chi.

Shodan Beginning Rank	Ch'u Chi Beginning Rank Beginning Trainee	Shogo Elementary Rank	Chi Shih (Gi Shi) Technician
Nidan Second Rank	Erh Chi Second Rank Greater Beginning Trainee	Shogo (Dai) Greater Elementary Rank	Chi Shih Technician
Sandan Third Rank	San Chi Third Rank Expert Master	Tashi Multi-talented Person (Expert)	Chi Shih Technician
Yodan Fourth Rank	Ssu Chi Fourth Rank Lesser Polished Master	Renshi (Sho) Lesser Polished Person	Chi Shih Technician

Tuan Shih, or Practician, refers to those who are able to understand the theories of styles other than their own, and by comparison, better understand their style, and improve their technique. The title, Tuan Shih, would also include four ranks: Wu Chi, Lu Chi, Ch'i Chi and Pa Chi.

Godan Fifth Rank	Wu Chi Fifth Rank Greater Polished Master	Renshi (Dai) Middle Polished Person	Tuan Shih (Tan Shi) Practician
Rokudan Sixth Rank	Lu Chi Sixth Rank Lesser Doctrinal Master	Renshi (Sho) Lesser Polished Person	Tuan Shih Practician
Shichidan Seventh Rank	Chi Chi Seventh Rank Mid-level Doctrinal Master	Kyoshi (Naka) Mid-level Faithful Person	Tuan Shih Practician
Hachidan Eighth Rank	Pa Chi Eighth Rank Greater Doctrinal Master	Kyoshi (Dai) Greater Faithful Person	Tuan Shih Practician

Levels nine through twelve reflect a person who has a thorough understanding of the theories of their style to such a degree that they will be able to explain any theoretical problems, and to research into the strong and weak points of the theories, and to put the theories into a scientific and rational basis.

Ta Shih, or Person of Arrival, is the next title, its rank referring to one who is judged by his or her teaching ability, writings and/or publications. To the person of this level, all martial arts theories are but a unification of science and arts theories.

Kudan Ninth Rank Exemplary Master	Chiu Chi Ninth Rank	Hanshi Exemplary Person	Ta Shih (Tatsu – Shi) Person of Arrival
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Hua Shih, or Master of Comprehension, refers to someone who is regarded as having a comprehension of martial arts theories of other styles to a depth that will enable the practitioner to readily point out the strong and weak points of all styles.

Judan Tenth Rank	Shih Chi Tenth Rank	Hanshi (Shihan) Exemplary Person (Person of Example)	Hua Shih (Ka Shi) Master of Comprehension Master Example
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T'ung Shih, or Master of Almightyness, is, in fact the highest obtainable level. A holder of this rank is regarded as having a purely philosophical concept of martial arts. To this person, martial arts are but a kind of formless and boundless philosophical theory. This person is regarded by all persons in the martial arts as having a distinctive theory of their own towards the martial arts, and having contributed something of importance towards their own style.

Juichidan Eleventh Rank	Shih I Chi Eleventh Rank Master of Almightyness	Seiko Hanshi (Seiko Shihan) Exemplary Man of Character	T'ung Shih (To Shi) Chief Grand Master
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Hsuan Shih, or Sage of Philosophy does not usually exist in physical reality. It denotes an ultimate stage of ideal proficiency to all martial artists. This is usually a posthumous award, due to the fact that all kinds of theories, no matter how proficient the founders are, will never reach the ultimate stage of perfection on this plane. Those living who receive this award are considered to be Meijin, or "living saints."

Junidan Twelfth Rank	Shih Erh Chi Twelfth Rank Sage of Philosophy	Kaiden Hanshi (Kaiden Shihan) Exemplary Man of Character with Complete Transmission of Art	Hsuan Shih (Gen Shi) Fully Proficient Master Example
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The parenthetical words after the Chinese titles are their Japanese pronunciation.

One more point needs to be addressed. The "Chi," as in "ch'u chi," is pronounced "kyu" in Japanese. That is, "Shodan" would actually be "Shokyu," if transliterated. I have used the recognized equivalent of "dan," as that is its meant equivalent.

When awarded Junidan by his organization, Leo D. Wilson, Shihan, showed true humility twice. Upon being presented with his award, he stated, "I can't accept this." Although those present were upset they understood he believed himself to be unworthy of being designated a "living saint." After a considerable period of reflection, he announced, "I will accept this. If I cannot accept the decision of those I have chosen to carry on with Midori Yama Budokai, then I have chosen wrong." With these words, he placed the decision of others before his own, again, a true mark of humility.

Before his passing, Wilson Shihan awarded two individuals with the rank of Juichidan. The first being his son and successor, and the second your present Hanshi, Ron Rogers. At the time of Cary Wilson Hanshi's succession, he and I agreed that only Wilson Shihan possessed the knowledge to be Junidan, and the rank of Junidan was retired. In addition, we acknowledged the ranks we had received, but retired them as unawardable at the present time as it would take a Junidan to award them.

As a general guide, the following may be useful in using the Honorary Ranks of Professorship above. Wilson Shihan modified time in grade considerably for MYB, believing the person so honored should be of an age to actively pass on the knowledge, for which s/he was so honored. Traditionally, Judo ranks were first given more leniently, and became stricter later on.

Tashi (Expert) referred to a 3rd or 4th Degree Black Belt.

Renshi could be 4th, 5th or 6th Degree, and were considered persons who had mastered themselves. They were generally assistant to a kyoshi and could receive Renshi three years after achieving Godan. If the budoka were 30 when s/he received Godan, s/he would be a minimum of 33 when s/he received Renshi. This is presuming the person were twelve when they began and made every promotion on time.

Kyoshi could be a 6th or 7th Degree with no less than seven years as Renshi. They should be a minimum of 31 years of age. The title refers to a degree of inward perfection. If the budoka received Renshi at age 33, s/he would be a minimum age of 40 when s/he received Kyoshi. Again, this is presuming the person to have been 12 years of age when they began and having received each promotion on time.

Hanshi was reserved for the highest black belt grades of 8th to 10th, and signifies an understanding (kokoro) of the art/s. It was given a minimum of twenty years from Kyoshi, and the recipient had to be a minimum of 55 years of age. If a budoka were 40 when s/he received Kyoshi, s/he would be a minimum age of 60 when s/he received Hanshi. This is assuming the person were twelve years of age when s/he began and received each promotion on time.