

# Testing

**Tests are hard, fun, sweaty rights of passage to new levels of training, responsibility and community.** On Test Day, students are reviewed by a Sensei—usually *not* their current instructor.

Each stripe and belt signifies a body of knowledge, level of skill and evolution of spirit that any visiting instructor should be able to call upon simply by looking at a student's belt. As such, students are individually invited to test when those attributes are observed in daily training instead of after a certain number of classes attended or amount of dues paid.

A Cuong Nhu tester is more like a *sherpa* than a drill instructor. The tester fully expects that everyone there is fully prepared for the test or their Sensei would not have sent them. The tester, therefore, acts as a guide, leading prepared climbers up the mountain. Tests are intimidating as they approach, exciting as they happen, and in hindsight, fun and valuable learning experiences.

Test eligibility should never be presumed, and it is impolite to plead with a Sensei to test. In Cuong Nhu etiquette, an inappropriate question would be, "Can I (or my child) take the next test?" An appropriate question would be, "At this stage, what can I (or my child) work on to become a better martial artist?"

## Adult Testing

Adult tests are held quarterly. Tests last 60-90 minutes for low-ranked adults and about three hours for advanced adults. Black belt tests are held over the course of a three-day event at the International Training Camp on Memorial Day weekend or at the Grand Master's Winter Regional test in Jacksonville, Florida.

Belt tests are given by visiting instructors and Masters to ensure national standards. Unity encourages advanced students to attend regional tests at other Cuong Nhu dojos around the country. Co-mingling ensures that as students approach teaching and leadership roles within Cuong Nhu, they are immersed in the culture of the style and can develop relationships with Masters who will provide life-long instruction and encouragement.

## Kids' Testing

Major tests for kids are held quarterly; smaller tests are held as needed. Beginners tests are designed to introduce kids to the testing process and to build self-confidence. As they progress, students test less frequently and are held to higher standards. Parents should attend to provide encouragement and to learn more about our martial arts community. Tests last about 50 minutes for the youngest kids and 90 minutes for older, advanced kids.