

Vovinam Việt Võ Đạo

The Meaning of Vovinam Uniform

Within daily life, all activities, relating to internal or external affairs, carry specific characteristics. In one aspect, it distinguishes its uniqueness with other organisations. In another aspect, it also implies a philosophy or belief of a specific organisation. Often these specific characteristics demonstrate through ceremonies, and uniforms Vovinam Việt Võ Đạo, is also the same as other organisations, its activities and uniforms carry its own culture and customs to highlight its own philosophy.

Vovinam Uniform, during the founder Nguyen Loc's time, was quite simple. It consisted of a tee shirt and short. The late Grand Master Le Sang and his fellow disciples then improved the status of Vovinam uniform around 1964. The Board of lead masters has come up with the detailed resolutions, to tighten up Vovinam Uniform, and belt colours for Vovinam disciples.

Although most Martial Arts have chosen White as their uniforms, Vovinam has chosen Ocean Blue as it represents generosity and vast like the sea. Beside the uniform, Vovinam belts also carry a meaning representing the training duration of the disciples. Training includes both Martial Art and its philosophy. In general, Blue represents (Hope), Yellow represents (Earth, and Skin Colour), Red represents (Fire, Blood) and White represents (Purity, Bone Marrow). In response to development of Vovinam during the late 1980 period, the late Grand Master has decided to introduce Black (Colour of Water) into Vovinam Rank.

Together with the uniform is Vovinam Logo, Name Badge, and belt also carries the meaning of "Cương Nhu Phối Triển" (Formulated results derived from a combination of Forceful (Hard), and Gentle (Soft) Techniques) and our theories.

Forceful (Hard) techniques are valuable, as they represent courage, powerful strength and fearless. They also represent absolute, iron and stone like spirits of a martial-artist. Gentle (Soft) techniques are very subtle. They represent softness, in many situations they can also neutralise the forceful strengths. Yet, they also demonstrate the gentle attitudes of a martial-artist. A martial artist with forceful and powerful characteristics but lack of gentle and soft characteristics, will not be able to actively transform. Sometime too hard and rigid, can lead to a prevention of martial art advancement. However, soft and gentle can neutralise but cannot control the situation. In other words, Soft and gentle only attitudes will make one become inactive rather than proactive. Further, without hard and rigid attitudes, a martial artist will lose the powerful and fearful appearances, and courage and will not be able to fully advance to a level where one can absorb the best of the martial art techniques and ideas.

From the above belief, after many years exploring The Eastern and Western Martial Arts, the Founder, Nguyen Loc, had searched for methods to combine Yin/Yang (Âm Dương) to formulate "Cương Nhu Phối Triển" for modern Vovinam. This idea represents on Vovinam's Logo, attached to the left hand side of the uniform. The logo will reside on the left hand side of the uniform forever and should not be moved or changed. Opposite to the logo, on the right hand side of the uniform, is where the name badge of the disciple resides. The name badge will change with the disciple level. Varying from Blue, Black, Yellow and Red. These are well known and normal in Vovinam.

Similar to above, two ends of the disciple's belt also have embroiled text. One will be "Vovinam" and the other "Việt Võ Đạo". Vovinam will always stay on the left hand side, as it is the original name and will not be changed or altered. However, "Việt Võ Đạo" is the name which can be

changed in time depending on the development status of our Martial Art. For Example, the Words “Việt Võ Đạo” could in future be changed to “Nhân Võ Đạo”... In other aspect, this side will also represent the level and rank of the disciple. Eg 1 stripe, or many stripes. A number of stripes varies based on the training duration and level achieved. These are normal in accordance with international standards. (Belt Rank will be on the right hand side)

Method of tying Vovinam Viet Vo Dao also follows the concept of “Cương Nhu Phối Triển” (tie 2 loops). Internal loop, represents Yin (Âm) and external loop represents Yang (Dương). The knot is the combination of Yin/Yang (Âm/Dương). I.e “Cương Nhu” (Hard/Soft).

In summary, Vovinam “Việt Võ Đạo” has been recognised absolutely. However, it could also be recognised relatively. As always, within the unchanged or unaltered state, there is always a possibility for modification. These could be seen from our techniques, behaviour, ceremonies and uniform....

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