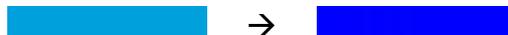




The Vovinam Philosophy Questions:

REQUIREMENTS FOR LIGHT BLUE TO DARK BLUE



1. What is Vovinam?

Vovinam is the internationalized word of the combined phrase "Martial Arts of Vietnam".

- *Võ*: stand for "Võ", which means "Martial Arts".
- *Vinam*: stands for "Vietnam", the country in which Vovinam was originated.

2. Why is Vovinam still known as "Viet Vo Dao"?

Vovinam has two divisions:

- "Viet Vo Thuat" means techniques of Vietnamese martial arts.
- "Viet Vo Dao" means philosophy/ethics of Vietnamese martial arts.

Therefore, Vovinam is the root, the origin while Viet Vo Dao is the fruit, the result after years of development. Vovinam or Viet Vo Dao are both correct. However, the correct way to say it is "Vovinam-Viet Vo Dao"

3. Why does a Vovinam disciple put the right hand on the heart during the saluting routine?

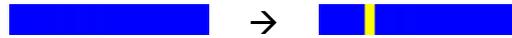
The right hand is interpreted as the steel hand, and the heart is interpreted as the benevolent heart. The whole routine means that a Vovinam disciple must combine courage, benevolence, technique and philosophy. Vovinam disciples can only use martial arts to warn, or convert any individuals, not to punish or seek reveng.

4. What is the basic rules regarding entering the training hall?

A Vovinam disciple must know these three basic rules:

1. Be on time. When being late, one must inform the Master or the Instructor. A disciple missing class must have an excuse.
2. During the training, one must practice hard and be friendly/helpful to one's peers.
3. When approaching a senior (a Master, an Instructor, or a senior disciple), one must salute to show respect to that person. Upon arriving and before leaving the training hall, one must salute to the portrait of the Founder.

REQUIREMENTS FOR PROMOTION TO DARK BLUE I



1. What is point of being a martial artist? Why does a Vovinam disciples practice martial arts?

The point of being a martial artist is to be able to defend oneself against harms.

A Vovinam disciple practices martial arts to have a healthy body, reasonable intelligence, and a noble will to learn, work, protect others, fight for justice, and serve the people.

2. What is the view of a Vovinam disciple regarding the use of martial arts?

Four main points:

1. Never use martial arts for commercial gain (such as commercial boxing or kickboxing....)
2. Never try to show off one's ability with others or disciples of other martial arts disciplines.
3. Only use martial arts for self-defense.
4. Only use martial arts to protect justice.

3. Under what circumstances, a Vovinam disciple is allowed to use force?

A Vovinam disciple only uses force when one's honor is hurt, life is threatened, and when one should protect justice.

4. Why is a Vovinam disciple not allowed to fight for commercial gain (such as commercial boxing)?

A Vovinam disciple is not allowed to fight for commercial gain because such commercial fights are only one side of martial arts. This will make the disciple have an aggressive will. On the contrary, Vovinam is a philosophical martial art, which wants to make better citizens for society rather than train fighters.

5. What is the difference between a student and a disciple?

A student is one who just starts practicing martial arts. A disciple is one who spends a trial period (usually 6 months), and is allowed to take the joining ceremony, and therefore is considered a member of the Vovinam family.

6. In the extended family of Vovinam, how the disciples treat one another?

Each disciple must love, respect, and help one another. Those attributes

are the basics of Vovinam's discipline. Eventually those attributes will create unity among the disciples, glorifying the honor of Vovinam and helping the disciples to become model individuals.

7. How many belt colors does Vovinam have? What is the meaning of each color?

Vovinam has five belt colors: Blue, Black, Yellow, Red, and White.

Blue: Represents the color of hope, which means that the disciple begins to enter in the life of a martial artist and to perceive the philosophy of martial arts.

Black: Represents the color of water, which means that the understanding of martial arts and its philosophy has started to merge into the body, building a foundation for the character of the Vovinam's disciple.

Yellow: Represents the color of earth, which means that the martial arts and its philosophy has permanently become a part of the Vovinam's disciple.

Red: Represents the color of fire, which means that the martial arts and its philosophy develop into a torch, which guides the path for the Vovinam's disciple.

White: Represents the color of chastity, which means that the disciple's martial arts and its philosophy has reached the absolute level and the disciple has also become the figure of the martial arts discipline of Vovinam.

8. What is the current rank hierarchy of Vovinam?

1. Self-defense: This level has two ranks, which are Self-defense Viet Vo Dao (light blue belt) and Beginning Viet Vo Dao (dark blue belt). Title: Student.

2. Blue belt: dark blue belt with yellow stripe(s), three ranks, each rank must have at least 6 months of training. Title: Disciple.

3. Black belt: black belt, one rank, with at least one year of training. Title: Instructor Assistant.

4. Yellow belt: yellow belt with red stripe(s), four ranks: with one, two, or three stripes; the last rank has red color with yellow outlining. Each rank must have at least two years of training. Title: Instructor, Senior Instructor, Master Deputy, Master respectively, which are equivalent to the international rank: Black belt first-degree, second-degree, third-degree, and fourth-degree, respectively.

5. Red belt: red belt with white stripe(s), six ranks, each rank must have at least four years of training, and a thesis in martial arts must be submitted upon promotion examination. Title: First Senior Master, Second Senior Master..., which are equivalent to the international rank: Black-belt fifth-degree, sixth-degree...

6. White belt: white belt with four color lines: blue, black, yellow, and red; only one rank, time of training is infinite. This is the highest rank reserved only for the Grand Master of Vovinam.

9. Please explain the emblem and flag of Vovinam?

1. Colors: The emblem and flag of Vovinam has four colors

- Blue: indicates the yin element and represents the sea and the hope.
- Red: indicates the yang element and represents the fire and the invincible will
- Yellow: represents the honor and triumph.
- White: represents chastity and wisdom.

2. Shape:

- Emblem: yellow background, the upper half is of the square shape, the lower half is of the circle shape; which represents the Yin-Yang Philosophy of Vovinam.

- Flag: yellow background, the height equals 3/5 the length, and circle in the center equals 1/3 the height.

- Emblem and Flag: the small blue-red circle represents Yin and Yang. The white circle represents the Dao (or the "way").

10. What is the name, date and place of birth, passing date and place of the late Founder of Vovinam-Viet Vo Dao?

The late Founder is Nguyen Loc. He was born on April 8, the year of the Rat (1912) according to the lunar calendar. He was born in the village of Huu Bang, county of Thach That, Son Tay province (suburb of Hanoi today), and passed away on April 4, year of the Rat (1960) in Saigon. His remains are now preserved at the Altar Hall, 31 Su Van Hanh Street, District 10, Saigon, Vietnam.

11. When did the Founder finish the research of Vovinam?

Where did the first demonstration of Vovinam take place?

The Founder completed the research of Vovinam in 1938. The first demonstration of Vovinam took place at the Great Auditorium of Hanoi in the fall of 1939.

12. Where and when did the first open Vovinam class take place?

The first open Vovinam class took place in the spring of 1940 at the University of Education (Ecole Normal) at the Cua Bac Street, Hanoi.

13. Who is the current Grandmaster of Vovinam-Viet Vo Dao? When and where was he born?

The current Grandmaster is Le Sang. He was born in the fall of 1920 in Hanoi.

14. What is the development of Vovinam today?

Today, Vovinam develops strongly in Vietnam and is present in many countries in the world.

REQUIREMENTS FOR PROMOTION TO DARK BLUE II



1. Please explain the first pledge of Vovinam.

The first pledge is about the ideals and purpose of practicing martial arts, which is to go beyond the current achievement of the art in order to serve the nation and mankind.

2. Why don't we need to have the final goal of achieving the ultimate peak of martial arts?

We don't need to achieve that goal because it is unrealistic and impractical.

3. Please explain the second pledge of Vovinam.

The second pledge is about the disciple's obligations toward Vovinam and the people; which is to persistently promote Vovinam and help develop young generations of Vovinam.

4. Please explain the idea of loyalty to Vovinam?

Loyalty here means being loyal to the art, to the ideals and the direction that the art has created, not being loyal to any individual. However, if an individual has been given the responsibilities of Grand Mastership, and if the Grand Master is following in accordance to the correct path, then Vovinam disciples have the obligation to assist him/her and to be loyal to him/her as well.

5. In order to promote Vovinam's teaching, what must a disciple do?

Train hard to become Instructors and Masters in order to promote the art and philosophy to the next generations Practice the ideals of Vovinam in everyday life to achieve harmony within the family, love and respect among friends, and assets of the community and nation.

6. Why is the obligation of a Vovinam disciple to help develop future generations of young Vovinam disciples?

It's beneficial to the community or the nation to develop strong generations of Vovinam disciples because youth have always and will always be the most formidable wall to defend and build a better community and nation. There exists in each Vovinam disciple a love for nation; hence, every Vovinam disciple will fight for the survival of the community and nation that disciple lives in.

7. Please explain the third pledge of Vovinam.

The third pledge is about the unity among Vovinam disciples.

8. Why is unity the most important goal of a group?

Unity is the most important goal of a group because it's decisive factor in determining the strength or destruction of the group.

9. What must a Vovinam disciple do in order to build unity?

Vovinam disciples must get rid of personal prejudices, egotistical tendencies, and any ideas of personal vengeance. If there are any disagreements or misunderstandings, they must be resolved immediately.

10. Please explain the fourth pledge of Vovinam.

The fourth pledge is about the discipline and the honor of the martial artist, which is the absolute compliance to the Vovinam's code of conduct and the upholding the martial artist's honor.

11. What is the code of conduct of the Vovinam discipline?

The code is self-imposed discipline, meaning that each disciple regulate his/her own behavior by observing others. The superiors and seniors need to lead by examples if they wish their disciples to follow their directives; if the disciples fail to follow the examples of the superiors and seniors and refuse to obey their directives, then the disciplinary methods must be applied or the disobeying disciples must be expelled from Vovinam.

12. What is individual heroism?

Individual heroism is a practice in which an individual has talents but lacks the group's discipline, refusing to self-impose oneself within the guidelines and acts upon impulses without clear sense of direction or purpose.

13. What is the honor of a martial artist?

The honor of a martial artist is the honor of a group of individuals whose ideals and actions are just and righteous, such as defending the oppressed and the weak. This is the type of honor that surpasses the individual ego to enter oneself into the ethical path of martial arts.

14. Please explain the fifth pledge of Vovinam.

The fifth pledge is about the awareness of using martial arts: always respect other styles of martial arts and use martial arts for defense of oneself and justice.

15. If a martial artist from another style of martial arts behaves inappropriately, what is the role of a Vovinam disciple in that situation?

When having to discipline a certain bad individual of another style of martial arts, Vovinam disciple must know that this is an absolute last resort in order to steer that individual into the proper way, not generalizing and insulting the honor of that entire martial arts style.

16. Please explain the sixth pledge of Vovinam.

The sixth pledge is about the direction of learning and the ethical thinking of a disciple, which are technical and ethical improvement in all life aspects (martial arts techniques and ethics, education, and profession).

17. What must a Vovinam disciple do in order to study successfully?

In order to study successfully, a Vovinam disciple must:

1. Learn and apply broadly anything that can be learned.
2. Ask carefully the things that one could not understand.
3. Think critically and carefully of the things one has learned.
4. Reason clearly (comparing, dissecting, organizing the pro's and con's)

18. What must a Vovinam disciple do in order to purify the mind?

In order to purify the mind, a Vovinam disciple must:

1. Live a healthy life: strong bodies produces healthy minds.
2. Be ethical: always be merciful, generous and understanding of others plights
3. Be candor and honest
4. Be calm and peaceful: avoids situations that could lead to hostility.
5. Be alert and helpful: one must be able to be flexible to face with all situations unexpectedly.

19. What is ethics? Why must a Vovinam disciple practice good ethics?

Vovinam ethics is the culmination of the ability to resolve, to regulate, and to harmonize all soft and hard, dark and light, static and dynamic elements of all things in the universe. A Vovinam student must train to practice ethics because it's the basis of all good habits. It's very crucial in the training of the mind and the body in martial arts.

20. Please explain the seventh pledge of Vovinam.

The seventh pledge is about the goals of living including chastity, modesty, honesty, and nobility.

21. What is the idea of leading a clean and chaste life of a Vovinam disciple?

The disciple leads a clean and chaste life by keeping one's body and mind pure yet aware of all negative aspects of society by listening, observing and confronting the facts of life to understand, resolve, and turn them from bad to good.

22. What is your understanding of a modest life of a Vovinam disciple?

A modest life is without wanting unnecessary things. One must live within his means and with the reflection of the community. Avoid giving discomforts to others because of earthly things.

23. What is the idea of honesty and candor of a Vovinam disciple?

A Vovinam disciple lives honestly with others; however, a Vovinam disciple also needs to understand the deceitfulness of others to avoid being taken advantage of and to avoid taking advantage of others.

24. How do you explain nobility?

Nobility exceeds normality as well as pettiness in thoughts and actions and therefore must be trained over times.

25. Please explain the eighth pledge of Vovinam.

The eighth pledge is about will power through training to overcome any obstacles and any forms of oppressions.

26. In order to temper your will power, what must a Vovinam disciple do?

In order to temper your will power, a Vovinam disciple must: Research and think critically using all available information prior to making a decision. Once a decision is made, act upon that decision to achieve the desired results using all of your energy, eagerness, and determination.

27. Please explain the ninth pledge of Vovinam.

The ninth pledge is about how one must think, make decisions and act correctly and practically.

28. Why must you need to observe every angle and possibility?

You must do this so that you can determine what is right and what is wrong, whether something makes sense or not, so that you can act accordingly and in a timely fashion to prevent and minimize negative consequences.

29. What is perseverance? What are the biggest challenges in life that you must preserve?

Perseverance means that you must develop an iron will. Defeats should discourage you and oppression should not subdue you, so that you can overcome any obstacle with strength and agility.

A Vovinam disciple must persevere these goals:

1. Oppression can not subdue you.
2. Poverty can not dishonor you.
3. Wealth and power can not corrupt you.

30. How you become pro-active in every aspect of your life?

You are pro-active in every aspect in life by actively search for the answer of any questions. You must maximize your creativity, flexibility and intelligence to face all situations and circumstances. A pro-active person tends to love people,

cooperate with others without underestimating the situation or overestimating one's own abilities.

31. Please explain the tenth pledge of Vovinam.

The tenth pledge is about the positive traits a Vovinam disciple must have. Vovinam disciples must have self-confidence, self-control, and be self-critical with one's self while showing humility and tolerance to others.

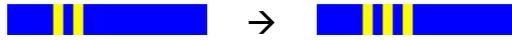
32. What are self-confidence, self-control, humility, and mercy?

Self-confidence: Believe in your abilities, a just cause, and your will power to expand the goodness of yourself so that you can constantly improve. ***Self-control:*** Winning yourself is the objective. Control your negative traits and behaviors and minimize your weaknesses by focusing on training martial arts skills and studying its philosophy. ***Humility:*** Be humble to peers, seniors or the elderly; listen to what they say, you may learn something from their experience and wisdom. ***Mercy:*** Render mercy to your opponents; be tolerant to your underlings. Remember that they haven't experienced what you went through.

33. What should be the appropriate behavior of a Vovinam disciple when looking back at past thoughts and actions?

Vovinam disciple looks back at past thoughts and actions with a critical mindset and outlook. You must be able to separate your strengths and weaknesses, things that could have been done differently so that you can improve. Avoid looking back with blind self-pride and impudence when achieving successes and blaming or nagging when facing failures.

REQUIREMENTS FOR PROMOTION TO DARK BLUE III



1. Please define the meaning of martial arts skills.

Martial arts skills are techniques using strength, speed, and agility (empty hands, kicks or weapons) to defend against humans or animals.

2. Please explain what is the way of martial arts (Vo Dao).

The way of martial arts is a path, system of thoughts and actions clearly established within a discipline with regards to the lifestyle of a martial artist.

3. What is the difference between a martial arts school and a martial arts discipline.

A martial arts school that teaches its pupils to use martial arts skills to defeat other humans and animals is simply not enough. A martial arts school must also guide and instill in its pupils a proper code of conduct to ensure success and respect from others. This code of conduct in accordance with the martial arts discipline is Vo-Dao.

4. According to history, until what period of time did the Vietnamese martial arts Way almost materialized through the creation of martial arts university: Giang Vo Duong.

In the year 1253 during the Tran Dynasty, the first University of Martial-arts was developed along with the National Academic Institute. It was in this period that the Vietnamese martial arts' Way was almost materialized.

5. Explain the characteristics of family/clan-based teaching and secret teaching.

Family-based teaching is the teaching of martial arts in the narrow confinement of family members and a few trusted disciples outside of the family.

Secret teaching refers to the beliefs that a martial arts student, no matter how trusted he/she became, the teacher always reserved a few techniques to prevent the student's betrayal. Thus, there are no codified and uniformed training system and many excellent techniques and training methods became extinct.

6. What are the essential objectives of VietVoDao?

There are three essential objectives of VietVoDao:

A) **LIVE**: with all the fierceness and full capacity of mind and body. One must always try to improve or to perfect one's self on three inseparable aspects: A healthy body, sharp intellect, and honorable spirit; thus enabling the individual to be beneficial to his/her family and society.

B) **HELP OTHERS TO LIVE**: One does not use his/her advantages to bully or to rob others of their livelihoods or their rights to life, justice and the pursuit of happiness. One must respect, assist, share or create opportunities for others to achieve and to advance to the same level of comfort and happiness whenever possible.

C) **LIVE FOR OTHERS**: This is also the highest objective; it asks the disciple to give up certain spiritual and physical benefits, even risking his/her life for others if deemed necessary; because our lives are connected with the lives of others, our successes and achievements are often due to assistance and support from others; therefore, at times, we must give up ourselves to help others in the time of needs.

7. What are the goals of VietVoDao (the Way of Vietnamese martial arts)?

There are three goals VietVoDao strives to achieve:

1) To preserve, develop and expand the knowledge of Vietnamese martial arts. Fully exploit the Hard and Soft elements of the human body through the practice of Vovinam-VietVoDao by filtering the traditional martial arts and wrestling techniques of Vietnam, and then combine and refine the best elements of other martial arts disciplines in the world.

2) To collect, study and create new techniques and training procedures to improve and to build upon existing Vietnamese martial arts foundation.

3) To develop and train disciples on three aspects: Strength, skills, and ethics of martial arts.

7. With regards to strength, how does VOVINAM train its disciples?

With regards to strength training, VOVINAM helps disciples to achieve a hardened, agile and healthy body. This body will enable the disciple to overcome all forms of challenges and many forms of illness.

8. With regards to skills, how does VOVINAM train its disciples?

With regards to skills, VOVINAM helps arm the disciples with highly effective and practical techniques for self-defense and to defend justice and righteousness.

9. With regards to ethics, how does VOVINAM teach its disciples?

With regards to **ethics**, VOVINAM helps disciples to develop an honorable spirit, a tempered will, gallantry, a strong sense of self-discipline, a life style that fosters unity and friendship, and a tradition of selfless service. This code of ethics is reinforced with much emphasis on humility and kindness in order to benefit one's self, family, society and humanity.

10. In order to fulfill above goals, what is VOVINAM-VVDs goal statement?

In order to achieve the above goals, the vision of VOVINAM-VVD that guides all organized activities, we must follow these 5 beliefs:

- 1) All activities of VOVINAM-VVD must be based embracing humanity as deliverance; strong ethics as guiding principles, discipline and tempered will as means of delivery.
- 2) The VOVINAM discipline is a grand family in which all disciples love and respect one another. This love and respect interweaves to become the regulations of our discipline; it is the glue that keeps all disciples united to honor our discipline and to help each other to become more perfect human beings.
- 3) The VOVINAM discipline is always proactive in all aspects of youth education.
- 4) All activities of VOVINAM do not convey political or religious influences.
- 5) The VOVINAM discipline always respects other martial arts disciplines in order to serve common purposes.

11. Please explain the general meaning of the **Cuong-Nhu Co-Development theory.**

The most common explanation is that **Cuong** means hard, and **Nhu** means soft. In martial arts teachings, the styles that favor Cuong often have strong and tough discipline, using external strength as its base, often very stern and direct in its dealing in life. The styles that favor Nhu often have yielding and adapt quickly to changes. In the observation of the bamboo of Vietnam, the hard, soft,

durable, and sharp elements equally interconnected to become one form. The bamboo is then said to be the truest essence of the Vietnamese people.

Through that observation, after thorough research from many martial arts disciplines throughout the world and within national boundary, Late Founding Master Loc Nguyen utilized the principle of "**HARD-SOFT CODEVELOPMENT**" as the basic foundation and essence of Vovinam-VietVoDao. Hard-Soft Co development is not simply a mix of both characteristics but an ever changing and adaptation in endless shapes and forms depending the environment and situation. It may be compared to the yin and yang.

12. What is demeanor/behavior?

Demeanor is all that is externally descriptive of an individual, for example: The ways one works, studies, dresses, walks and talks.

13. Why must a VOVINAM pupil always observe his/her demeanors regardless of place, time and circumstances?

A VOVINAM pupil must always observe his/her demeanor in all situations because others will assess and or judge his/her worth as well as the honor of our discipline.

14. What should a VOVINAM disciple always try to avoid?

There are 5 basic bad behaviors a VOVINAM disciple must always try to avoid:

- 1) Avoid being so arrogant and boastful of having martial arts in a crowd or in public.
- 2) Avoid bashing or bad mouthing the honor of other martial arts disciplines because this is unthoughtful behavior that often leads to misunderstandings.
- 3) Avoid all acts that provoke violence; otherwise, people will think that our discipline trains disciples to pick fights with others.
- 4) Avoid all unnecessary and unclear conflicts or conflicts that aim at "self-promotion" with others.
- 5) Avoid being drawn into ultra-nationalistic fervor, denouncing foreign martial arts with anyone.

15. What must a VOVINAM disciple always practice?

There are 5 basic good behaviors a VOVINAM disciple must always try to practice:

- 1) Practice the principles of Vovinam in everyday life to earn the love and respect of others.
- 2) Generate goodwill with other martial arts disciplines so that they, too, can understand and respect us, and are willing to cooperate with us in the effort of expanding martial arts skills and martial arts way.
- 3) Be pro-active in all activities without being reminding.
- 4) Be ready to take on responsibilities; help others with enthusiasm without being selfish.
- 5) Train and retrain; constantly learn in order to improve.

16. When studying/practicing, what are the proper behaviors of a pupil?

In class (the training center), the pupil must respect rules, orders, teachers (instructors/masters) and fellow peers.

- 1) *Respect rules and order.*** be self-disciplined with regards to the regulations of the discipline, group and/or training center.
- 2) *Respect instructor(s):*** Salute to the instructor(s) and/or master(s) when arriving to the training center in accordance with the Vovinam etiquette. Pay close attention and follow closely to the instructions and commands given by the instructor and/or master in charge.
- 3) *Respect fellow peers:*** Be cheerful and cordial with fellow peers. Be helpful, encouraging and assist others that are in need. When accidentally hit hard by others, don't be angry. Avoid loud arguments and avoid any forms of hatred.

17. At home, how should a disciple behave?

At home, a disciple must respect elder, those of the same age, and be giving to the young.

18. At work, how should a disciple behave?

At work, a disciple must carry the demeanors of "a martial artist" by exhibiting valuable traits such as being alert and prompt. In order to achieve this, one must divide the task in three phases: Planning, execution, and completion.

19. When planning a task/project, what behaviors and characteristics should a pupil practice?

During the planning phase of a task or project, one must:

1) *Be realistic:* Hold all necessary information without guessing. Don't waste time arguing pointlessly. Always have a plan of action and calculate to maximize the end results.

2) *Be proactive:* Dare to think and dare to act; Endure hardships and don't being afraid of obstacles.

3) *Be Enthusiastic:* Be engaged and close with people and activities; energetically shoulder tasks with all of your might.

4) *Be Fair:* directly resolve the core problem/issue; always put the interests of the group above individual interests; try to be objective and without personal bias or prejudice.

20. When executing a project, what behaviors and characteristics should a pupil practice?

When executing a project a disciple must:

1) *Be determined:* Once one decides to do something, one must start to execute the task right away and be persistent and enduring no matter how many obstacles are in the way.

2) *Be timely:* One must resolve or finish a project in a most timely manner.

3) *Be flexible:* One must adapt to changes effectively and quickly (remember: This is not the same as being hasty and exceeding the boundary of the laws).

4) *Be perseverant:* One must be willing to accept and to endure the many challenges ahead.

21. When finishing a project, how does a pupil evaluate his/her past actions?

1) *Self-evaluation:* Evaluate yourself by clearly and objectively stating positive and negative aspects to learn from this experience.

2) *Team evaluation:* Evaluate the positive and negative aspects of those working with you.

3) *Task evaluation:* Evaluate the objective or the task to see if there is any else you can do to improve or to enhance it in the future.

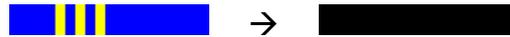
4) *Task projection:* Assess similar situations and problems in the future so that you can be better prepared next time.

22. What demeanors must a disciple exhibit when performing martial arts?

When performing martial arts, a disciple must:

- Have fit and clean uniforms
- Have a cheerful and relaxed attitude
- Have tact in composure and in speech
- Have discipline and follow the rules set forth by the organizer

REQUIREMENTS FOR PROMOTION TO BLACK BELT



1. What is the process of martial arts development in the world?

The development of martial arts worldwide is greatly effected by geography, cultural heritage, social changes, historical conflicts, and pace of social advancement.

2. How many periods of martial arts development are there, please explain?

There are 4 stages of martial arts development:

1) Fighting against nature (animals): Because of survival needs, man and animals engaged in fighting to gain the advantage.

2) Duel fighting: This form of fighting is also known as "might is right"; deciding/resolving conflicts between two individuals.

3) Fighting in mass: The art of fighting against groups, or one person dominating over many others.

4) Military integration: Applying martial arts teachings into the military to build and to protect one's nation.

3. From where did ancient societies create different art forms such as: monkey forms, tiger forms, horse forms, eagle forms, snake forms, ox forms?

The accumulated experiences from combating wild animals to protect and to survive were codified by our ancient ancestors to create such forms of fighting.

4. What are the characteristics of these forms?

The characteristics of:

Monkey forms: The monkey form emphasizes quickness, bounciness, and lots of swaying.

Tiger forms: engage in clawing, choking, and is fast and furious.

Horse forms: fake retreat with surprise counter-attacks (elbows, back kicks, halberds, returning-horse spear, etc.)

Eagle forms: surprise with claw-attacks from above

Snake forms: stay close to the ground, sway to avoid attacks, and fight with direct and snappy attacks

Ox forms: tackling, choking and locking, using the whole body to attack the opponent (throwing and joint-locking techniques).

5. From where did the concept of using martial arts to combat animals change to combating other human beings?

Constant conflicts within each civilization/society due to: marriage, division of property, electing chieftains, etc. gave way to change martial arts focus from combating animals to combating among human beings.

6. When martial arts were incorporated into military strategy, how did duels continue to affect the outcome of a battle?

Even when martial arts were incorporated in to military strategy, the influence of duels affected the outcomes of major battles when the two leading generals often fought each other. The winner will be awarded with the winning of the battle.

7. What were the reasons behind the origin of the art and science of massive combat?

Due to increasing lust for power and wealth as well as polarized ideas about protecting one's cultural heritage, the art and science of massive combat materialized.

8. In what epoch did martial arts training integrate into military strategy? Who was the first known military strategist of Vietnam?

In Vietnam, the Iron Epoch was denoted as the era in which martial arts studies were introduced into military strategy. The first known military strategist of Vietnam was the famous General Ly Thuong Kiet (prior to him, the Vietnamese people had successfully fought off many foreign domination attempts. However, these victories were due to high degrees of nationalism, not quite being able to apply the art of maneuvering to conquer the opponent as applied by Gen. Ly Thuong Kiet)

9. What are the characteristics of traditional Vietnamese martial arts?

Based on geographic features of Vietnam and a high degree of national identity, Vietnamese martial arts have three following basic characteristics:

1. Fitting with the body frame of the small but brave Vietnamese (with effective use of geographic advantages).
2. Hard and Soft Co-development.
3. Integration and adaptation of multiple arts and styles.

10. What elements allowed Vietnamese martial arts to combine and adapt multi-disciplinary aspects of martial arts worldwide? What is the direction of this adaptation?

Due to its unique geography, Vietnam has been exposed and received many aspects of martial arts worldwide. This enables its people to combine and adapt them to fit their style and physical attributes to form styles that are uniquely Vietnamese.

11. What are the benefits of martial arts?

Practicing martial arts helps develop a strong and fit body, sharpen one's intellect, and strengthen one's moral character. Furthermore, martial arts training helps to protect human lives and enrich people with history.

12. In today society, are there any benefits to martial arts training?

With so much scientific and technological advances in today's society, many people think that there is no use for martial arts training. These people forget that an advanced weapon system needs a stable hand and a strong will to control. And no matter how advance technology can be, it cannot transform a coward into a hero. Hence, in whatever era, martial arts training is always very useful.

13. In ancient Vietnam and China, martial arts training were popular in what social classes?

In ancient China and Vietnam, martial arts training were very popular among religious sectors and the warrior class (Taoist priests and Buddhist monasteries welcome many disciples).

14. Japanese martial arts Way:BUSIDO originated how?

The Japanese warrior code: Bushido originated from the Samurai class - warriors chosen from the upper class and expertly trained to protect the Shoguns -

Regional lords and the Japanese Emperor; they were also used to suppress uprisings and helped the Emperor to rule Japan effectively (Samurai is a warrior class - Bushido is the way or the code of conducts for those who considered themselves a samurai)

15. What are the similarities and differences of martial arts Way among Japan, Vietnam and China?

When comparing the Japanese Bushido with China and Vietnam, we observe:

A) *Similarities:* Being loyal to the nation and honor; high degree of self-respect, reliability, discipline, and no fear of death.

B) *Differences:* The Japanese Bushido actively engage in political and power struggles and tend to become self-righteous and worship nationalism through the symbol of one individual (the emperor); the warrior will forsake his life for the benefit of the group.

The Chinese and Vietnamese martial arts "**way**" is to *disengage* in nature. We live and train in seclusion; practices individual heroism, capable of making sacrifice for higher cause (however it tends to generate unrealistic ideals), critical thoughts and actions; values life.

16. What is our perception of martial arts Way in today society?

Today, our perception about martial arts is much broader and can be summarized with the following major points:

- Those who follow contemporary warrior code are first and foremost a person who lives with realistic expectations and realistic ideals; they live closely among others, sharing the pains and joys of others within their society; they are people with grand ideas who possess a can-do attitude, who can plan and execute the smallest of details to achieve a long lasting career and social objectives.
- With regards to religious faiths, today's warriors think that religions benefit people tremendously in times of needs. Hence, we accept and respect the positive values of religions, however, we stay clear all forms of superstition. We accept and adapt all philosophies, all beliefs, and all religious practices in order to balance our spiritual lives and our physical lives.

17. What is the true essence of physical and spiritual lives?

The true essence of physical and spiritual lives lies in the nurturing (spirituality) and constant training (physiology) in order to enhance our total experience of living.

18. On what two foundations do the Vovinam discipline develop a model martial artist?

The Vovinam discipline develops a model martial artist based on two foundations:

- A) Spiritually rich but realistic in actions
- B) Materially abundant but humble and frugal

19. What are the 12 attributes of thoughts and behaviors that a Vovinam disciple need to constantly train, maintain and develop? Please define them?

With oneself, a disciple must:

- 1. Train the body:** Train in breathing techniques, martial arts techniques and general fitness.
- 2. Train the mind:** Open the mind to new ideas and new information through education, observation, and participation in all forms of discussion and exchange of ideas.
- 3. Train to center through Khi Cong (Chi):** Train to focus through breathing in order to have self-control, to be alert yet calm and relaxed in all situations.

To others in relationship, a disciple must:

- 4. Be sincere:** with honesty, warmth and kindness.
- 5. Be committed:** to be fair and generous in thoughts and actions.
- 6. Be loyal:** to friendships, to others in the spirit of a warrior code.

To one's self in relationship with others, a disciple must:

- 7. Be modest:** always be modest to win others' hearts

8. Be generous: always accept and forgive others (even your enemies); always evaluate to see if you are generous enough to others.

9. Be harmonious: always find ways to coexist and to unite with others to find strengths and comforts

In order to live in accordance with the honor of the Vietnamese Warrior code, a disciple must try to accomplish these three goals:

10. Develop one's self: create for one's self a stable and positive place in society in two aspects:

- Spirituality: Always try to learn, evaluate, and be sincere to correct mistakes as well as enhancing positive traits.
- Materials: Be financially self-sufficient in order to maintain impartiality and independence.

11. Develop ideals: harbor and act to fulfill honorable destiny.

12. Develop Legacy: work hard to create for yourself a worthy career and a legacy for future generations.

20. How can we achieve the following characters: humility in success and perseverance in defeat?

When we truly commit and dedicate ourselves to an ideal and a grand destiny, we will achieve humility in successes and perseverance in failures.

21. What are the differences between a title and a career? If you can choose, would you choose to have a career or a title?

Title: a name and a place in society, which can be changed from time to time, depending on the environment (everyone has a title).

Career: is the goal and direction in life; it's long term and can benefit many others not just one's self.

Therefore, titles are stepping stones for us to achieve a successful and fulfilling career. This is why when choosing, we must choose to develop a career and put it above the importance of titles.