
The Judogi

Posted by Stephen - 2008/06/17 09:31

The only real piece of equipment in Judo, possibly the biggest monetary cost that Judoka will spend, apart from weekly fees the Gi is the biggest financial investment, some are fortunate to have multiple Gi's some have one and obviously make sure to always keep it clean for every session, (dont you).

I have had many types of Gi from a single weave which is not ideal for a heavyweight, as they dont tend to last long, and a Dax Moskito which is so heavy its like fighting someone just putting it on.

The Gi that you wear is important for many reasons, one is that it unifies you with your partners on the mat, you can have a pauper and a millionaire on the same mat and they are equal, they are wearing the same, and they are there to achieve the same thing which is to learn Judo, with a mutual respect for each other.

The Gi should be white, I know you may see some people wearing a Blue Gi in competition and on the tv, most televised fights there will be one judoka in white and one in Blue,

The Gi that you train in is white, its white for a reason.

(little rant now) Judo is not something that you can buy, which one of the very important lessons, you cannot go and buy the best Gi and then become the best, the gi does not maketh the Judoka, you can only become good at Judo by doing judo, no special boot or go faster stripes will help you achieve any better technique or speed.

The idea of a named gi with splashes of sponsorship is something which I personally am not pleased to see, I see many Gis with names embroidered on their back, which forme shouts out of someone being flash, and the only thing i then want to see is that person get thrown all over the place, In judo their is no place for ego. (rant over)

I purposely havent written why the Gi is white or the importance of it, i'd like your opinions as to what you think on this issue,

Do you think the Blue gi has a place in Judo?

Do you think more colour could or should be introduced?

Do you think the white Gi has any importance and why?

I purposely mentioned that the Gi is the biggest financial investment,

what do you think are the other costs? (not financial)

What do you think you get from Judo for your investment

Please be as long winded as you like

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Re:The Judogi

Posted by senseitaz - 2008/06/17 13:28

I personally think that blue gi's have a place in high level comps especially televised ones.

As for adding more colour definitely a no no. And embroidered names on the back of gis' ,another no. I refused to let my son get this done when he competed in the nationals a few years ago.Now that he is older he now agrees with me (but not very often,bloody tennagers:lol:)

I agree with your statement about the white gi being akin to equality. I believe that it makes people ,especially beginners ,feel more comfortable on the tatami.

Besides financially, I think the only other cost to me over the years is frustration at not being able to perform some techniques to the best of my ability and also the physical costs in injuries over the years. But I would do it all again as the benefits far outweigh the negatives.

Personally I have gained more peace of mind over my years in judo not to mention keeping my fitness levels high as I get older.

My investment in this wonderful art/sport has paid dividends to me and my family and long may it continue.

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Re:The Judogi

Posted by Stephen - 2008/06/17 13:53

Hi Taz

The Blue Gi has become more acceptable now and isnt really noticed in most places, as if its quite normal, as members of the BJC, we do not see Blue gi in competition or in training, even at the nationals, The BJC can be a bit like the fashion police as well and restrict any shoulder stripes etc, they can go a bit OTT,

The Blue gi issue is one that will never be resolved, however, I think everyone has to agree that it is here to stay, I remember the days when it was unheard of, and the first Blue Gi I saw was on an international player, I now have visited clubs and they are happily training in Blue Gi,

I have even witnessed a true atrocity, a Blue Gi with Kohaku Obi, :ohmy: (red and white belt) what was interesting was the person taking the session was also a rokudan and yet he wasnt even wearing his kohaku obi, he doesnt wear it unless its an appropriate time to do so.

I did take a glance at said Rokudan, when he noticed this chappie parading around in his costume, it was an amusing sight to see the look on his face;)

I havent yet personally witnessed the baseball cap yet but give it time...unsure:

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Re:The Judogi

Posted by senseitaz - 2008/06/17 14:46

I have no problem with people wearing a blue gi (I own 2 reversible gis from years ago) but I wear white fighting film gis. Light enough to train in and strong enough for shiai and heavy randori. The only marking is a small logo on one of the sleeves.

I have worn adidas with shoulder stripes before now but I am BJA and they are not so traditional as BJC. It's all about the person wearing the gi, not the gi that makes the person.

Keep well Guv. Speak soon.

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Re:The Judogi

Posted by Stephen - 2008/06/17 15:10

Hi Taz

I have met many people who compete in the BJA and they require a Blue Gi for that, I have no problem with that at all, not one iota. (I Promise this isnt a Blue Gi vs White Gi thread mate honest.)

I have also met many people who havent or do not compete, and they also train in a Blue Gi,

As an example, I met up with Scott Moore in Denver, he wears a Blue Gi, the man has competed not only nationally but internationally, he is a paralympian, so it goes without saying that he would obviously be in need of a Blue Gi, the same with his wife Heidi, its a Judo club which competes at a very high level.

The Blue Gi has its place, and for me that is at international or relevant competitions,

There are principles attached to the white Gi, I am not opposed to the blue gi anymore, I also havent warmed to it either, it is something that is here and it is of no consequence I certainly dont get offended by it,

I just wonder how many people understand the reasons for the white Gi.

The BJC are apparently more committed to being traditional when it comes to Judo, the difference at times is nominal, although many BJC Judoka have been spotted donning a Blue Gi when training dotted around the place. (I have my

spies:laugh:)

A lot of things have changed over the years in Judo, the introduction of the Blue Gi being one of them, as I said before its here to stay, but I do think its good to remind and educate on why the white Gi was the staple of Judo and the hidden lessons behind it.

I am in no way judging anyone, we all have our own Judo, and we all learn differently, which is what makes it so fun when we converse on a forum like this as we can get opinions accross and learn from each other.

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Re:The Judogi

Posted by Guardian - 2008/06/17 17:25

The reason why Kano Sensei came up with a standard uniform for the practice of Kodokan Judo was to remove class distinction. Prior to this, Jujutsu and other martial arts practitioners trained in what was basically their street clothes. As you might expect, how one dressed would reflect upon their station in life. So if you have a wealthy practitioner, you could expect that they would be better dressed to train than say a poor farmer. However, Kano Sensei wanted Kodokan Judo to be practiced by everyone, rich and poor, as a means of physical education and to the betterment of society. By putting everyone in the same white, non-descript uniform, you could not tell a rich Judoka from a poor one. Trainees would be judged on the merit of their training and effort, and not on what social class to which they belonged.

Dr. Kano was a teacher of the elite, he instructed members of the Japanese royalty, whose children considered this PhD renaissance man equivalent to one of their butlers and treated him as such, at least according to Dr. Kano's autobiography. This first hand experience at snobbery made him consider the class distinction to be suspect, even in his day. Dr. Kano was obviously a man of vision and very ahead of his time - a true innovator and genius on the level with DaVinci, Newton, Liebniz, Godel, Freud, and Planck!

Also remember the time period we are talking about. Japan was just entering the "modern era" and was making an attempt throughout their culture to throw off their class distinction in all areas. The abolishment of the warrior class (bushi) was just part of that process. However, those that had become used to their higher class distinction went out begrudgingly . Kano Sensei's desire to blur the lines of class within the Kodokan was not only in keeping with his own philosophy that "judo was for everyone", but also followed the trend in the new modern Japan.

Based on this, I would speculate that the reason a white judogi was used, rather than a variety of colors, is because it was a plain and inexpensive cloth in with to make the dogi. The Japanese had the dying of cloth in indigo to a real artform. So the availability of a blue dogi (more than just about any other color) was certainly there. However, the dying process was extensive, and the resulting material was quite expensive. So if multiple colors were allowed, and a Judoka of that day wore an indigo judogi, it could be reasonably assumed that this person was wealthy. So you lose the class distinction transparency.

So therefore if everyone today switched over to the blue judogi, the same would hold true - no class issues, just people training in uniform. Dr. Kano hit the nail on the head, the white judo gi is a very good idea. The Japanese were, and still are, a class society.

The white judo gi was not only a product of such empirical reasoning , but a spiritual one as well. Dr. Kano was also a religious man, and saw judo as a way of spiritual, as well as 'character' development.

In judo, the beginning is 'white' (white belt), but also the ultimate top rank (the 12th dan) is equally a white belt; thus the end point equals the beginning. The color white is seen in the gi, but also in the white stripe on the joshi obi 'female belt'. The female is where life begins. Similarly, it is the color of ososhiki, a funeral or death. The end is the beginning.

The samurai preparing to commit seppuku wears a white kimono. White is also the color of purification, of pure intentions and of honor, a color that illustrates one is no longer occupied by the ego. It is the color of void or emptiness. Judo's second principle (ji-ta kyo-ei or mutual prosperity) does no longer deal with one's own, but with how you can be at the service of others, how you can contribute to one's happiness. In essence reaching the stages, per definition is beyond the ego still interested in materialism or obtaining medals or results. It is about how can I contribute to humanity. Deviating from the color in essence rejects the second principle, argues, in service of the ego instead of others.

Strictly speaking even a modern bleached white gi is a deviation. In judo, the principles of of wabi, sabi, yogen and mono-no-aware receive attention in Itsutsu-no-kata and Koshiki-no-kata, some of the most advanced stages of judo. 'Wabi' in English, more or less means simple, subdued, austere beauty Color-wise this implies an adherence to something which could be the creation of nature, natural. The traditional off-white gi conforms to that, the modern bleached one is

borderline; the color still exists naturally in for example, fresh white snow, but it isn't quite natural anymore for the fabric. The blue gi violates the principle of wabi, being completely unnatural. Kano's own first 'gi' was not white either, it was natural.

Many senior Judoka do not necessarily have a huge problem with the blue judogi for international competition, although many would prefer that the IJF had not bothered with it. The reasoning why Kano Sensei chose a simple white gi is just as valid today, as it was in his. It does remove distinction and distraction in the dojo. With just a plain old white judogi, we are all the same, just judoka training in the way.

Re:The Judogi

Posted by Stephen - 2008/06/17 18:17

Hello Guardian & Welcome

I was wondering when you were going to start posting and never dreamed it would be so well written, eloquent and informative,

It is obvious that you are knowledgeable in Judo, If its not too rude of me to ask I wonder if you would be able introduce yourself in the intro thread, or maybe give a hint as to the extent of your judo knowledge,

I also completely understand if you do not wish too, anonymity here is not a problem.

Thank you very much for your first contribution of what I hope becomes many

Re:The Judogi

Posted by Darkslide632 - 2008/06/17 20:31

Do I think a blue gi has a place in Judo? I don't know. I don't really think it matters, to be perfectly honest. I can practice Judo in shorts and a tank top, so the color of the gi does not bother me much. That being said, I usually like to see people on my mats wearing a white gi, simply so that blood will show up faster should anyone get hurt.

I see no need for MORE colors. I'd be perfectly happy with just white.

The white gi has no real importance to me. We have guys who come to Judo class in white, blue and black gis, and I don't care too much. Buying a gi is expensive and if someone already has a gi for BJJ, I'm not going to ask them to buy another, as long as their current gi meets the standard for a Judo gi.

IN the end, as I stated, I prefer white because blood shows up quickly if someone gets hurt.

Re:The Judogi

Posted by senseitaz - 2008/06/17 21:33

The Blue Gi has its place, and for me that is at international or relevant competitions,

I agree with you Guv. I apologise if I sounded judgemental in my last post, I certainly did not mean to. White gi for me personally. But I have 5 of them and 2 reversibles (that I don't wear anymore) so its easy for me to only wear a white one.

Going to Belgium next week and only need to take a white gi. Good ole' masters comp. Us old farts look ridiculous in a blue gi anyway:lol: :lol:

Re:The Judogi

Posted by Dr Leadbeater - 2008/06/18 10:31

Coloured Gi do have a place in Judo,

as a Referee, I find deciding who did what during a fast moving Shiai is easier when one fighter is wearing blue.

I am one of the lucky ones who can afford several Gi.....I have 15 of them, 3 Blue, 10 White, 1 Red (from the Kugatsu Judo Club Team of which I was a member for many years) and a Black one because it was given to me as a gift.

I only allow White or Off White Gi on my mats, and the only time I have ever worn a Blue Gi to training is when I could not get a White Gi dry due to weather conditions.

My students are instructed that coloured Gi are not permitted in the Dojo, and as I am usually the person who orders the Gi for a noob, I ALWAYS get them White or Off White.

Re:The Judogi

Posted by Stephen - 2008/06/19 10:19

senseitaz wrote:

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I agree with you Guv. I apologise if I sounded judgemental in my last post, I certainly did not mean to. White gi for me personally. But I have 5 of them and 2 reversibles (that I don't wear anymore) so its easy for me to only wear a white one.

Going to Belgium next week and only need to take a white gi.Good ole' masters comp. Us old farts look ridiculous in a blue gi anyway:lol: :lol:

Good luck fella,

You didnt sound judgmental at all mate, I understood what you meant exactly, I once made a mistake by buying a reversible as it was cheap and i thought it would be ok as long as I dont reverse it, until it was washed and it went baby blue.

No comments please
