

## SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FIRST DEGREE

1st Degree - Expert or Novice?

One of the greatest misconceptions within the martial arts is the notion that all Black Belt holders are experts. It is understandable that those unacquainted with the martial arts might make this equation. However, students should certainly recognize that this is not always the case. Too often, novice Black Belt holders advertise themselves as experts and eventually even convince themselves.

The 1st Degree Black Belt holder has usually learned enough technique to defend himself against a single opponent. He can be compared to a fledgling that has acquired enough feathers to leave the nest and fend for himself. The first degree is a starting point. The student has merely built a foundation. The job of building the house lies ahead.

The novice Black Belt holder will now really begin to learn technique. Now that he has mastered the alphabet, he can begin to read. Years of hard work and study await him before he can consider himself an instructor or expert.

A perceptive student will, at this stage, suddenly realize how very little he knows.

The Black Belt holder also enters a new era of responsibility. Though a freshman, he has entered a strong honorable fraternity of the Black Belt holders of the entire world; and his actions inside and outside the training hall will be carefully scrutinized. His conduct will reflect on all Black Belt holders and he must constantly strive to set an example for all grade holders.

Some will certainly advance into the expert stages. However, far too many will believe the misconception and will remain in novice, mentally and technically.

## MEANING OF PIL-SUNG

### **Pil-Sung**

*Certain victory through strength, courage, and indomitable spirit*