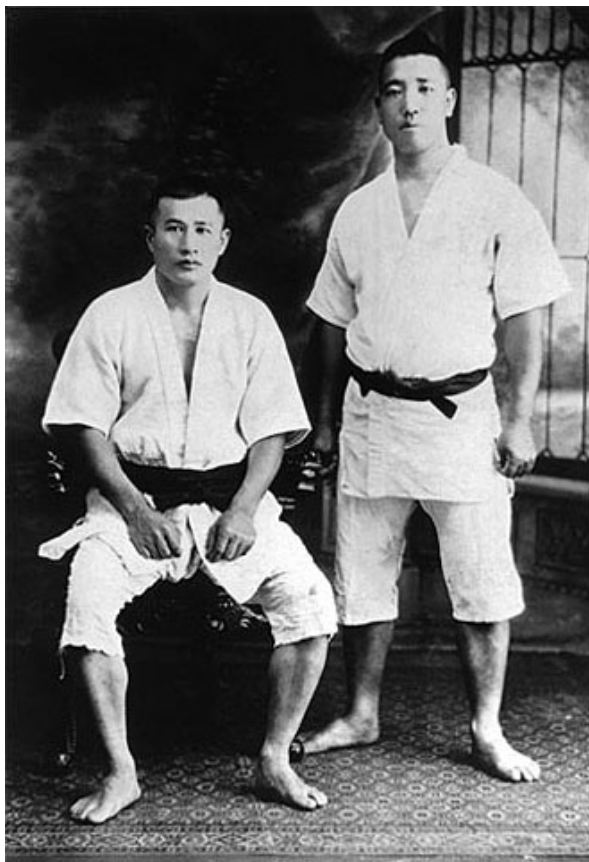


## WHAT MAKES A BLACK BELT?



It should be realized that a black belt is invariably a mark of personal efficiency in the skill of his art. It has no relationship to the person's ability as a teacher; it is certainly no indication of his academic or theoretical knowledge. Lastly it is no indication of them as a decent human being (a black belt can be just as big as ass as a white belt). Each person's ability as an instructor, head instructor, or as a human being, must be judged on that individual's merits alone. A title depending on a very narrow specialized skill however good, is not a substitute for knowledge and integrity. Each person has to earn a standing of respect by his own untiring efforts, both in the dojo and out of it. Martial arts offers an opportunity for self-expression, he will earn respect for the effort, provided they have been humble, unselfish and sincere in their effort. These are the individuals we want for black belts.

### **ASSISTANT INSTRUCTOR 1<sup>st</sup> DAN – 2<sup>nd</sup> DAN**

The assistant instructor is the individual who knows the superficialities of technique. He actually has not thought deeply about the subject he teaches. He has an excellent idea of a technique and can instruct on it adequately, but he has not tried to find out what makes a technique what it is. He does not understand the application of the essential principles



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of various types of technique in all circumstances. In general he is a person who has been content to soak up his knowledge from other people. This is good provided of course he has listened to good teachers, but very limited. He can help most over the small obstacles, how to do this throw, how to do that hold, but he **WILL NOT** make any new contributions to the art. Although in terms of people taught his direct contribution is great, and such a person has a very important part in the organization.

Much of the development at a low level will depend on individuals of this caliber. In fact it is they who spread the word and encourage the Novice to make great efforts to progress. At this end of development the assistant instructor is a very important asset, his knowledge gets people started and pointed in the right direction, but in the end, because of his range of knowledge, his contribution to the arts is limited.



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**HEAD INSTRUCTOR 2<sup>nd</sup> DAN – 6<sup>th</sup> DAN**

The head instructor has the same general technical knowledge of the assistant instructor, but also has studied and is studying every aspect of the art he possibly can. The individual has ambitions to become a good teacher, not ordinary and knows he cannot know too much about anything.

With such an attitude as this, his specialized knowledge is bound to increase. But this is not enough. He must also acquire some working knowledge of the immediately relative subjects. He must find out about the physical activities which impinge on the art he is teaching. The good teacher has never the time to sit back and say I know it no matter to which art he is referring. Knowledge expands every day, so should the head instructors.

It seems to be a never ending task, to gain all the knowledge that surrounds us, but it is essential that he tries. One can never tell when some piece of apparently irrelevant connected or unconnected scrap of knowledge will suddenly come out of his subconscious and throw a brilliant light upon some present problem. Such an aim of widespread knowledge must not be



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founded on enthusiasm for the arts but also upon the enthusiasm for knowledge itself. The head instructor must drive himself harder in this regard, than he ever drives his students.

### **THE PROFESSOR**

This is the top of the leadership tree. Very few will reach this level, a mere handful every generation, if that. Nevertheless, it is a position all head instructors should be aspiring to. The professor would have all the qualifications of the head instructor, but whereas the head instructor influence would be mainly limited to the dojo, the professors would extend well beyond those confines.

To define the qualities of a professor at this level is very difficult because they are so real. In addition to all the knowledge of the head instructor, both the arts and connected subjects, there are important qualities difficult to define objectively. A leader must have moral virtues and through some inner kind of peace be able to influence and lead others. He will set an example others will rarely be able to equal, but will always inspire them to try. In the trying they will become the better for it. For now of course the



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professor is not limited strictly to teaching, although he will be doing that and doing it extremely well, but he will be helping his pupils to become better human beings. The arts are simply a tool the professor uses to achieve this. The arts are not an end in itself, only a means to an end, a better and fuller person.

Without the professors, the arts simply become just another way of expending energy in a rather futile manner. By establishing ideas behind the arts, the arts can contribute something to life, for ideas have a transfer quality, especially when given by the right person – The Professor.

