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PEDAGOGY

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From technique to way: an investigation into taekwondo's pedagogical process*

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Abstract

Background. Martial arts in general provide character building traits, but how those qualities are acquired has not been elucidated fully for taekwondo (TKD) practitioners.

Problem and Aim. Despite TKD being one of the most widely taught martial arts in the world, its pedagogy remains undefined. *Musul* (무술, 武術, martial technique), *muye* (무예, 武藝, martial artistry), and *mudo* (무도, 武道, martial way), three terms used in Korean martial arts, were defined etymologically to determine their validity and to elucidate TKD's pedagogy.

Methods. *Musul*, *muye*, and *mudo* were redefined according to their *hanja* (Chinese ideograms used in written Korean) definitions. Then, those definitions were compared and correlated to martial arts education and skill acquisition literature.

Results. *Musul* was defined as *martial skill* or *martial technique*, *muye* as *martial artistry*, and *mudo* as *martial way*. These terms correlate to Western and Eastern skill acquisition models, including *shuhari*, the established Japanese martial art pedagogy.

Conclusions. *Musul*, *muye*, and *mudo* are a stratified pedagogy. They express how TKD skills and knowledge are learned, adapted, and then adopted into daily life routines, respectfully. Determining exactly what and how TKD teaches provides new insights into the art and may permit improvements in its educational practices.

Note on Romanization

Korean terms are written in the McCune-Reischauer system, but Korean personal names are left to the individual's preferred spelling (e.g., Choi Hong Hi). The names of individuals are left in the Asian tradition of surname first. Well-known loanwords like *taekwondo* (TKD) and *judo* are written in Standard English. Japanese terminology was rendered into the Japanese Hepburn Romanization System except in cases of loanwords and well-known surnames (e.g., *kendo* and Kano, respectfully). Additionally, Chinese terminology was transliterated into pinyin except in loanword instances such as Taoism and common spellings of names (e.g., Confucius).

Introduction

Despite TKD being one of the most widely taught martial arts in the world, its pedagogy remains undefined [Capener 2005; Pieter 2012: 33]. While it is known that martial arts in general provide character and other building traits [Lakes, Hoyt 2004], how those qualities are acquired has not been elucidated fully for TKD practitioners. Determining exactly what and how TKD teaches will provide many new insights into the art and how to better instruct it.

The terms *musul* (무술, 武術), *muye* (무예, 武藝), and *mudo* (무도, 武道) are well known in martial art circles in Korea, but they are rarely mentioned in international publications. Interestingly, TKD educators and leaders have not defined the terms clearly. Research to date has attempted to explain these concepts philosophically [Yang 1999], historically [Lee 2006: 46-47, 88], and evolutionarily [Kukkiwon n.d.: 159-161], but many of these interpretations can be too esoteric to improve the skills of the average TKD practitioner.

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Musul, *muye*, and *mudo* are rarely discussed outside of Korean martial art circles [Lewis 2010], as evident from the lack of English academic articles on the topic. In an example of how esoteric discussion on these terms, Lee nevertheless states:

Musool [*musul*] (martial technique) refers to those techniques with which you can control and conquer your opponent. Muye [*muye*] (martial art) is the method of obtaining harmony of mind and body with which you use the martial techniques at the level of art, sublimating distinctions between mind and body into perfect harmony. Mudo (martial principle) refers the comprehension of the ultimate truth beyond the more practical level of Muye [sic]. All of these distinctions among Musool, Muye and Mudo, however, will and must disappear in the end. Thus, talking about taekwondo, as merely Mudo will hide its true Do. [Lee 2006: 46]

Without further explanation, these definitions fail to provide a comprehensive understanding of what *musul*, *muye*, and *mudo* are. More importantly to the average student is the lack of insight they give to general practice.

Yang [1999] states *musul*, *muye*, and *mudo* have hitherto been defined either to bolster nationalistic intentions or for scientific purposes. Indeed, nationalist biases have plagued TKD academics [Moenig 2013; Chang 2016]. Yang [1999] states scientific definitions attempt to ignore TKD as a martial art and reformulate it into a sport. He consequently called for a meta-language to be used to define *musul*, *muye*, and *mudo* [Yang 1999].

All but one of the previous attempts to define these terms did not interpret the most obvious denotations of the *hanja* (Chinese ideograms used in written Korean). Since over sixty percent of the modern Korean language consists of vocabulary originating in *hanja* [Cho 2013], it is necessary to look to these ideograms to decipher the etymologies of most Korean words. As cited by the Kukkiwon [n.d.], Choi's [1995] did examine the *hanja* in *musul*, *muye*, and *mudo*. He wrote:

In Musul, the letter 'Sul' (術) is literally translated to technique, skill, system, etc. Mu (武)

is used to denote military tactics, skills, and system... The term Musul, regardless of some exceptions, is still used to denote the art, skill, and system of fight that has been developed and practiced by the warrior class... On the other hand, Muye (武藝) seems to combine the meanings of Mu (武) and Ye (藝), have a more general and broad meaning of Musul, and imply the martial arts as a whole [sic]." [Kukkiwon n.d.: 162]

As for *mudo*, Choi [1995] wrote, "Do (道) is the fundamental principle that describes creation, change, and development of the universe. Do is the road all mankind should walk, follow, and may not bypass"

[Kukkiwon n.d.: 163]. Choi's definitions revealed little, if anything, about TKD practice itself. The Kukkiwon, the institution charged with Olympic (i.e., sport) TKD's education practices and rank promotion, states these terms can be a general, yet "essential," paradigm of TKD [Kukkiwon n.d.: 164], but fails to explicate what that may be. Moreover, Yang [1989], as cited by the Kukkiwon [n.d.], calls for a realistic, philosophic method for understanding what constitutes a martial art. To date, this has yet to be done.

The current study therefore defines *musul*, *muye*, and *mudo* etymologically more concretely to reveal TKD's self-cultivation pedagogy. The terms were thus redefined according to their *hanja* and found to mean *martial technique*, *martial artistry*, and *martial way*, respectfully. These definitions were then compared to literature on martial arts education and skill acquisition models to determine their validity and provide a stratified pedagogy for TKD.

Taekwondo as a Means of Self-cultivation

Although controversial [Capener 2016], current research in TKD history shows the majority of the art's roots lie within Japanese karate [Adrogué 2003; Moenig 2013; Moenig, Cho, Kwak 2014; Capener 2016; Song 2016]. In fact, the first generation of TKD instructors learned karate in Japan in the 20th century [Moenig, Cho, Song 2012]. Later, the term taekwondo was coined by the South Korean general Choi Hong Hi, who established it as the South Korean military's hand-to-hand combat system and facilitated its popularity to that nation's civilian populace as a means of self-cultivation [Choi 2001]. Choi and others modified karate techniques into something new, thus divorcing TKD from its Japanese progenitor [Moenig 2011]. It was then re-envisioned as a sport by the South Korean government [Kim, Kim, Kim 2004]. This rebranding of TKD as a martial art into a sport has led some researchers to claim a bifurcation in TKD pedagogy. For instance, Capener [2005] and Dziwenka and Johnson [2015] have claimed the two systems of practice are dissimilar. Lim [2000] goes as far as to argue that Olympic-styled TKD players cannot benefit to the same extent as individuals who engage in TKD training for self-cultivation purposes (i.e., individuals who practice TKD as a martial art).

TKD as a martial art predates its sporting component [Moenig, Cho, Song 2012]. Even World Taekwondo (formerly the World Taekwondo Federation - WTF), the governing body that regulates worldwide Olympic TKD, considers it foremost a fighting system with the ultimate goal of physical, mental, and spiritual cultivation [WTF 2015], which is in line with recent definitions of the term *martial art* [Johnson, Ha 2015; Martínková, Parry 2015]. As martial art

TKD focuses on self-cultivation [Dziwenka, Johnson 2015], a learning objective applicable to all TKD students regardless of their goals for practice, this paper considers TKD within a martial art, rather than sportive, context. A martial art is thus defined herein as a system of practical self-defense techniques that facilitates self-cultivation [Barczynski, Graczynski, Kalina 2009] through “trials of intelligence and moral courage” [Draeger 2007: 12].

Etymologies of *Musul*, *Muye*, and *Mudo*

Martial arts like TKD are often touted as providing benefits beyond pugilistic skills [Barczynski, Graczynski, Kalina 2009; Budden 2000: 7; Choi 1985: 8; Cooper, Taylor 2010: 71; Koch n.d.; Kodokan 2009: 6-7, 26; WTF 2015]. Draeger [2007] states traditional martial arts are meant to be paths of “self-cultivation” that lead to “self-perfection” (24). Several researchers have determined that physical practice alone is insufficient for practitioners to receive these benefits [Catalano *et al.* 2004; Kane, LaVoi 2007; Weiss, Wiese-Bjornstal 2009]. Tokitsu [2002] claims that martial arts training should in fact transcend fighting or performing an art (52). Likewise, Trulson [1986] states martial art instructors should adhere to “an explicit philosophy of nonviolence” and “a sense of responsibility to self and others” to provide something more than combat skills (as cited in Coakley [2011]). Practitioners would then be able to undergo a psychological and possibly spiritual paradigm shift. TKD, as a martial art, should facilitate these and other benefits [Cynarski *et al.* 2015]. Yet, how it does so remains unclear. An etymological examination of the terms *musul*, *muye*, and *mudo* can elucidate how TKD's pedagogical process.

Musul (*Martial Technique*): Taekwondo's Physical Skills

In *musul*, the *mu-* (무, 武) syllable is a combination of two other *hanja*, 戈 and 止, which mean *spear* and *stopping*, respectfully. In modern Korean, *mu-* also denotes other meanings such as *military*, *martial*, or *warlike*. Thus, a more precise understanding for *musul* should contain the idea of *stopping violence* [Lewis 2010]. Hence, the *mu*-syllable possesses a defensive, rather than an offensive, connotation. The second syllable, *-sul* (술, 術), “literally means skill or technique” [Lewis 2010] and has been used in Korean martial arts to “denote...an art or skill” [Ouyang 1997: 78]. When combined, the two syllables refer to TKD's techniques [Lewis 2010] and possess a defensive connotation [Kim 2012: 107].

Martial art practitioners learn and practice fundamental and systematized fighting skills (e.g., blocks, punches, and kicks) from their first class onward. Indeed, the “very essence of the founder's techniques

was embedded in...*kata*², and the student was able to gain an understanding through continually replicating the movements [Sakai, Bennett 2010: 117-119]. As quoted by Sidney, Omoto explains the first level of martial arts training as the knowledge of the physical skills of a martial arts system [Sidney 2003: 139-140]. As Budden cited, Shioiri reinforces this idea by stating the first step in the martial tradition is learning the physical lessons taught by instructors [Budden 2000: 7].

TKD's fundamental techniques are what differentiate it from other martial arts and combat sports, and the basis of all TKD knowledge is rooted within the learning and performance of these skills [Mayen, Johnson, Bosch 2015]. TKD education begins then with the knowledge of its fundamental techniques that includes its various strikes, blocks, kicks, stances, training methods, and standardized exercises. Since TKD knowledge stems from its fundamental movements [Mayen, Johnson, Bosch 2015], *musul* (martial technique) can denote TKD's first educational stage. *Musul* can thus be defined as the period when TKD fundamental physical lessons that define and exemplify TKD are learnt. As depicted in Figure 1, it can be considered the foundation of TKD pedagogy.



Figure 1. Taekwondo pedagogical process depicted as a hierarchical structure.

Muye (*Martial Artistry*): Taekwondo as Personal Expression

The syllable *mu-* (무, 武) in *muye* (무예, 武藝) retains the above meaning. The *-ye* (예, 藝) syllable on the other hand refers to an “art, talent or craft” [Lewis 2010]. The term *muye* can then be understood within its contemporary denotation and translated as *martial art* or, more possibly, *martial artistry*. To substantiate

² *Kata* (型 or 形) are “sets of prearranged offensive and defensive movements to simulate interactions with imaginary opponents” [Dziwenka, Johnson 2015: 2] used in many martial art systems. In Taekwondo, *kata* are referred to as either *p'umsae* (품새, 品勢) by the WTF or *t'ül* (튠) by the International Taekwon-Do Federation. As *kata*, *p'umsae* and *t'ül* are comprised of martial art's fundamental movements, we can extrapolate their training principles and apply them to general practice.

this understanding of *muye*, an examination of what happens after learning TKD’s fundamental skills was undertaken.

TKD practitioners should be capable of executing the art’s fundamental techniques fairly much at will at some point in their training. They may still be learning and refining those skills and may not have mastered every technique or principle; however, they should feel comfortable performing some skills after an extended amount of practice. Because they have long-practiced the art, they have experimented and most likely found their preferred techniques, established personal opinions about the art, and developed a unique fighting style. These adaptations are caused by a host of factors that include body shape, personality, training goals, instructor methodologies, and preference of techniques. They can adapt TKD’s physical skills in an individualistic (i.e., artistic) manner. By this point, TKD has become integrated into practitioners’ bodies and minds, and they can execute techniques without thought in manners unique to them. Practitioners at this level can thus be considered artists because of the self-expression TKD affords them.

The contrast of two professional boxers (i.e., combat sport athletes) can elucidate the *muye* concept. Both Muhammad Ali and Mike Tyson learned fundamental techniques such as the jab, uppercut, footwork, and ring control, early in their training (i.e., *musul*). Despite the fact they learned identical techniques, their styles of fighting could not be more different and, yet, they both became world champions. The distinction between the two boxers comes from the fact that although they learned the same fundamentals of their sport, their fighting styles reflect their personalities, preference of executing punch combinations and footwork, and boxing strategies.

We can draw many comparisons from boxing and TKD, because they are both classified as combat sports [Song *et al.* 2015]. Martial artists must similarly “investigate and devise techniques appropriate to [their] own age, build, height and individual characteristics...to discover and practice the techniques most suitable to [their] own situation” [Funakoshi 1994: 50], and TKD practitioners are no exception. TKD practitioners must drill fundamental techniques, theories, and strategies in order to derive personal insights and knowledge from them [Dziwenka, Johnson 2015]. Only through the practice of fundamental techniques can TKD practitioners determine what suits them best. Indeed, “anyone can learn some skill, but not everyone has made it such a part of themselves” [Lewis 2010].

Art is defined as a “skill acquired by experience, study, or observation” (Merriam-Webster) and “the quality, production, expression, or realm, according to aesthetic principles, of what is beautiful, appealing, or of more than ordinary significance” [Dictionary.com].

The *muye* concept as described above fits within these definitions. *Muye* was consequently determined to be the second stage of TKD’s educational system (Figure 1), because a personal expression of systemized group of fundamental techniques (i.e., an art form) can only be achieved after thousands of repetition and internalization of said techniques [Dziwenka 2014].

Mudo (*Martial Way*): *Transcending Physical Skills into a Philosophy*

The *-mu* syllable in *mudo* has the same militaristic denotations as *musul* and *muye*. The Chinese ideogram used for the *-do* suffix (道, 道) in *mudo* (무도, 武道, *martial way*), and for that matter TKD (태권도, 跆拳道), is the same ideogram used in the *Do* concepts found in Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism, albeit each of those belief systems defines *Do* uniquely. The *hanja* for the *-do* suffix is nevertheless translated as *the Way*. All of which makes defining and comprehending the *-do* suffix in both *mudo* and TKD problematic due to its multiple and esoteric denotations.

The history of modern Japanese martial arts and the beginnings of their use of the *-do* suffix provided insights into how to translate and understand *mudo*. The *-do* suffix was possibly first applied to a martial art when the jujutsu style known as Jikishin-ryū used it to discuss their fighting and mental skills, as opposed to the common *-jutsu* (術, Korean: *-sul*), which means *technique*, that referred only to a system’s physical skills [Draeger 2007: 119]. There were occasions when sword masters also referred to their practice as kendo, “but the common usage of the term now is in great part because of *jūdō*’s influence” [Kodokan 2009: 30]. The *-do* suffix was later used and popularized through Japanese martial arts in the late 19th century, where the original purpose of the *-do* suffix was to describe a combative training method “for both ethical and physical training” [Cooper, Taylor 2010: 73].

Kano Jigoro, the founder of modern Japanese judo, popularized the *-do* suffix in martial arts names. He innovated a new pedagogy in which jujutsu, the various forms of samurai hand-to-hand combat, were rethought into a systemized and stratified physical education system with the ultimate goal of developing practitioners’ character and morality [Kodokan 2009: 7-8]. Kano “was an ardent educator, and developed judo primarily as a way for moral, intellectual and physical education” [Kodokan 2009: iii]. Indeed,

Kanō was profoundly influenced by the education ideal that combined ‘physical education’ (*taiiku*) with ‘intellectual education’ (*chiiku*) and ‘moral education’ (*tokuiku*). To him, the purpose of physical education was to strengthen the body so that the individual would be a healthy and useful citizen.... It was only with these ele-

ments, Kanō surmised, that the Japanese people would be able to cultivate their individual worth and play a part in an 'enlightened society'. [sic] [Kodokan 2009: 26].

Knowing his system held new educational aims not necessarily found in the more combat-focused jujutsu, Kano replaced the *-jutsu* suffix with *-do*, or *the Way*. His "declaration of his choice to use 'dō' instead of 'jutsu' was a significant ideological turning point for all of the martial arts" [Kodokan 2009: 27].

Kano's biographers are quick to point out that he was a Confucian "with little interest in any nebulous religious or mystical mumbo jumbo" [Stevens 2013: 56]. He taught "appropriate behaviour" and "described an array of prohibitions" to his judo students [Kodokan 2009: 99]. Kano's intention was to use the *-do* suffix to indicate an educational path that cultivates physical strength, mental aptitude, and moral character. This was quickly adopted by many other Japanese martial arts like *kyudo* (Japanese archery) [Kodokan 2009: 40] and Shotokan *karate-do* [Reilly 1998: 84].

Ouyang [1997] states: "most modern Korean martial arts also have the 'do' suffix, reflecting the effect that the Japanese concern for some of their martial arts to have philosophical underpinnings has had on the Korean understanding of what a martial art should be" (86). TKD now possesses a *-do* suffix that indicates it too upholds the goal of self-cultivation. Although there were some Chinese influences in the development of Korean martial arts [Adrogué 2003], it is no coincidence that Korean martial arts resemble their Japanese progenitors in "formalities, ideology and general training activities" [Moenig, Cho, Song 2012].

The principle goal for practitioners of Japanese *budō* (Japanese pronunciation of *mudo*; i.e., 武道, 武道, *martial way*) is to develop the self: "The cultivation of one's spirit and mental attitude begun during practice in the *dojo* (training hall)³ should not cease after the physical and mental exertions end for the day. Rather, this should continue outside the *dojo*, in our daily routine" [Funakoshi, Nakasone 2004: 53]. Likewise, Choi states TKD is "an art of self-defense which aims at a noble moral rearmament, high degree of intellectual achievement, graceful techniques, formidable power and beauty of physical form, (so) it can be considered as a part of one's daily life" [Choi 1985: 8].

While other interpretations of the *-do* suffix are possible and potentially just as valid, the *-do* suffix used in TKD seems to indicate a means of self-cultivation in the Neo-Confucian tradition. There seems to be two interpretations of the *-do* suffix: it can be a means of spirituality and/or societal improvement. What follows are brief discussions on how the *-do* suffix has been inter-

preted in these two manners and explanations of how those interpretations may have originated.

Mudo as a Means of Spirituality

The *-do* suffix indicates TKD can be a means to heightened spirituality. A spiritual understanding of the *-do* suffix in the word TKD draws a connection between the martial arts and Taoism seemingly because the ideogram for *Do* in *hanja* is the Korean transliteration of the Chinese term for *dào*, or Tao (道). The concept of Tao is pronounced *Do* in Korean and *Dō* in Japanese, and it is also the founding principle of Taoism. According to Taoism, the Tao is the founding and pervasive energy that all existence originates from and flows back to, which gives the *-dō* or *-do* syllables the connotation of possessing a cosmology or worldview. Lewis (2010) posits the final stage of TKD training "is a way of life... that reveals to him something of the natural order of things, of the way of the universe." If a student "keeps on going, keep[s] on pounding and pounding" they cannot stop since "[e]verything in [the martial art] becomes you" [Sidney 2003: 140]. Martial art practice for some individuals can then bring a personal clarity of existence [Dziwenka 2014].

TKD researchers such as Lee [2000], Chun [2002], Cook [2001], and Lee [2006] claim this Taoist concept of *Do* as the spiritual foundation of TKD. They believe if one practices TKD long enough, their perception of the cosmos will alter. As Chu [2003] claimed, this understanding of *Do* promotes the idea that at the highest levels of TKD training practitioners' "martial arts and spirituality merge" (4). Some claim, if approached through a Taoist paradigm, the pinnacle of TKD training may even be enlightenment [Ryu, Kim 2012]. The Taoist concept of *Do* has been particularly espoused by the Kukkiwon and World Taekwondo. For example, taekwondo governing bodies claim that the *T'aegük P'umsae* and black belt *p'umsae* used in World Taekwondo competitions are based upon Taoist concepts [Lewis 2016]. Thus, anecdotal accounts and some academic research indicate *mudo* can be a form of personal spirituality in a Taoist tradition.

Then again, TKD can be learned within nearly any worldview. For example, Neo-Confucian self-cultivation (as seen above), Buddhist enlightenment goals [Dziwenka 2014], or Christian ethics (e.g., American Christian Taekwondo School [ACTS] organization) have all used TKD as a vehicle. Clearly, there is no consensus on the nature or goals of TKD spirituality. The diversity of spiritual options nevertheless indicate that TKD practitioners can pursue the art spiritually within their own worldview.

Mudo as a Means of Societal Improvement

Modern martial arts like TKD can also be Confucian in nature [Capener 2005; Donohue 2005; Stevens 2013], and TKD as a martial art was heavily influenced by Confucian

³ *Tojang* is the Korean transliteration of the Japanese term of *dōjō*.

beliefs [Tran 2004; Jo 2013]. Confucianism interprets *Do* as a means to improve one's life (i.e., self-cultivation) and society [Draeger 2007: 22-23; Lewis 2016]. The Confucian concept of self-cultivation can be understood in both a metaphysical and secular manner. Confucian self-improvement is connected to the Chinese concept of *tiān* (天, Heaven) metaphysically, which is essentially the ancient Chinese conception of God. Therefore, self-cultivation was viewed as being aligned with the Will of *Tiān*, and can be a metaphysical/spiritual practice.

Yet, *Do* in the Confucian perspective can also indicate a methodology or *Way* of doing something in which spirituality does not necessarily factor into the activity. Early TKD literature indeed does not claim that the art is a derivative of Confucianism, Taoism, or Buddhism. Lee [2006] states “Confucius, the Buddha, Lao-Tzu and Chuang-tzu never discussed Taekwondo” and that studying TKD from those perspectives often convolutes practitioners' understanding of the art [Lee 2006: 25]. Furthermore, “Tae Kwon Do was not based on Buddhism or religious values” [Gillis 2008: 162]; i.e., TKD practitioners were not intended to be engaged in a religious pursuit. This is not to say that oriental philosophical approaches cannot elucidate the benefits of TKD as many researchers have certainly done so (among many others, see: [Chu 2003; Chun 2002; Deshimaru 1982; Dziwenka 2014]). However, teaching TKD from a religious perspective would place TKD lessons and values in conflict with practitioners' existing belief systems. Thus, a secular-focused TKD education system and philosophy would more likely reach and benefit a global audience.

A secular understanding of *Do* would simply imply that when one person improves themselves, their achievements affect those around them and contribute to the betterment of society. TKD empowers practitioners with the physical and mental strengths to uphold the highest morals of their societies [Choi 1985: 12], which is in line with a secular understanding of Confucian *Do*. Therefore, martial art training is not only the pursuit of physical skills or a new form of spirituality, but how we apply those lessons to everyday life [Donohue 1998]. A precedence for a secular interpretation of Confucian *Do* exists: Kano Jigoro did not want judo to be connected to religious practices [Stevens 2013] as mentioned above.

Many of the earliest TKD practitioners and instructors all state self-cultivation is primary purpose for practice. As cited by Vitale, Tran [2004] also claims that “Choi also used the dash (-) or hyphen much like a bridge, as it was the demanding physical training that helped students over the passage of time to come to understand the ‘Do’ better” [Vitale 2015]. Others believed TKD should be used to cultivate students to become better members [Moenig, Cho, Song 2012; Rhee 2012] and leaders of their societies [Choi 1985]. For instance, TKD's tenets (i.e., courtesy, integrity, perseverance, self-control, and

indomitable spirit) prevent students from falling into savagery [Rhee 2012] by providing purpose for their physical training.

This secular Confucian interpretation does not negate previous studies and other opinions on *mudo*, however. It only provides an alternative avenue of study, one that may be more practical due to students' ability to find personal meanings through their individual practice. Yang [1989], as cited by the Kukkiwon [n.d.], states *mudo* can be understood as an “empty concept” (165). More precisely, Yang felt that *mudo* was open to personal interpretation, thus making the final learning objective for TKD open-ended and completely up to the student, an idea supported by Mayen *et al.* [2015]. Regardless if a student wishes to learn self-defense, mindfulness, competition values, or physical education, TKD affords that education. As such, *Do* is a methodology or *Way* of doing something in which spirituality does not necessarily play a part. The cultivation of the spirit (i.e., *character* or *personality* rather than a religious *spirituality*) can be the paramount educational objective for practitioners of martial art TKD.

Defining *mudo* as the final stage of a self-cultivation process adheres seemingly to the goals set forth by TKD pioneers and fits within Yang's [1989] call for a realistic paradigm of *musul*, *muye*, and *mudo*. The concept of *mudo* was thus defined as the final stage in the TKD pedagogical process. As shown in Figure 1, it must be the apex of martial art TKD, because it can occur only after decades of study and when a student incorporates their personal understanding of their training into everyday life. *Mudo* rests at the top of TKD pedagogy, because it can only be achieved after passing through the *musul* and *muye* stages. Interestingly, only the student can determine why they are practicing TKD, since they – not the instructor – determine whether their training's ultimate goals.

It should be noted that *muye* has been used historically to refer to all Korean military fighting systems. Confusion has arisen in the differentiation of *muye* and *mudo*, since many fighting systems are outlined in the *Muyedobot'ongji* (무예도보통지, 武藝圖譜通志), an 18th century Korean military text that plainly uses the term *muye* in its title. However, TKD was developed in the 20th century [Moenig, Cho, Kwak 2014] and “has no direct relation with the *Muye Dobo Tong Ji*” and any “‘genealogical’ relation of the techniques shown in the manual with those currently practiced in Tae Kwon Do...seems to be, to a large extent, a product of wishful thinking” [Adrogué 2003], a belief Moenig, Cho, and Kwak share [2014]. One reason for this is that the text is largely based on Chinese literature and concepts [Moenig, Kim 2016] rather than modern Korean martial arts. Lorge moreover states about martial arts in general that:

The modern understanding of martial arts as only unarmed fighting skills for self-defense, abstracted movements for self-cultivation, or the wielding of archaic weapons for aesthetics or improved health is a modern perspective inconsistent with most earlier practice. [Lorge 2012: 3].

Modern martial arts were developed in the late 19th century [Levine 1989], which was long after the *Muyedobot'ongji* was composed. Defining TKD's *muye* as anything other than within a modern arts context would consequently be taking the term out of its historical and linguistic contexts.

Justifications for the *Musul-muye-mudo* Process

Western Models of Skill Acquisition

Since TKD knowledge is rooted in its physical skills [Mayen *et al.* 2015], the TKD pedagogical process should correspond with how skills are acquired. Western researchers have illustrated processes for skill acquisition similar to the *musul-muye-mudo* process. For instance, Dreyfus and Dreyfus [1980] produced a five-stage skill acquisition model for the United States Army. The levels of their model progress from Novice, Competence, Proficiency, Expertise, to Mastery. Novice learners can begin learning “without experience of particular situations in the instructional domain” (1980: 7). Dreyfus and Dreyfus state learners must learn “rules” for particular actions and then be monitored and advised on how to improve (1980: 7). Learners progress into the Competence stage when they begin to understand and use jargon specific to their field of knowledge. Proficiency is achieved when individual lessons become germane “to the achievement of a long-term goal” (1980: 8), so that “[g]iven a set of aspects and their saliences, the performer uses a memorized principle...to determine the appropriate action” (1980: 10). In other words, one principle becomes applicable to various other situations. The Expert no longer needs to recall an “analytical principle...to connect his grasp of the general situation to a specific action” (1980: 12). Learners at this level possess a “repertoire of experienced situations...so vast that normally each specific situation immediately dictates an *intuitively* appropriate action” (1980: 12). Dreyfus and Dreyfus conclude their model with the Mastery stage, which “only takes place when the expert, who no longer needs principles, can cease to pay conscious attention to his performance and can let all the mental energy previously used in monitoring his performance go into producing almost instantaneously the appropriate perspective and its associated action” (1980: 14).

Likewise, Sennett [2008] argues in *The Craftsman* how laborers and artisans acquire skills through a three-step process. He states craftsmanship, or “the skill of making things well” (2008: 8), possesses three levels of ability: Apprentice, Journeyman, and Master. Apprentices learned by copying for approximately seven years until they could utilize their learned skills sufficiently (2008: 58). The level of Journeyman, however, required more than “brute imitation of procedure” as the artist had to demonstrate a “larger understanding of how to use what one knows” and “trustworthiness as a future leader” (2008: 58). A Master was someone who could not only produce excellent works but also who could guide the next generation of craftsmen. He had to possess “moral stature akin to that of an abbot” (2008: 57) and be an expert teacher and strong leader to maintain his guild's quality (2008: 58).

Both skill acquisition models illustrate that the road to mastery is initiated by the learning of fundamental actions required to perform a skill. Then, students begin to perform the skill without cognitive thought due in part to the thousands of repetitions and internalization of those movements. After years of practice, the student-now-master culminates their education into an intuitive awareness of how to accomplish a task. How their education culminated in mastership does differ. In the US army, a master was one who could perform a skill instinctively only. A medieval master craftsman could create intuitively, but was also a leader to his juniors and the community at large.

Alternatively, a TKD master is expected to be an expert artisan, a community leader, and be on a perpetual journal of self-realization. TKD masters can moreover identify a large part of their personality to their skill and the process in which it was learned as they find ways to incorporate TKD lessons into their daily lives [Mayen *et al.* 2015; Dziwenka 2014]. A complete comparison and analysis of these and other Western models is needed, but unfortunately falls outside of the scope of this paper. Nevertheless, these procedural processes seem to parallel the aforesaid definitions of *musul*, *muye*, and *mudo* and legitimize the idea that the terms can be procedural in nature.

Japanese Budō's shu, ha, and ri concepts

Japanese *budō* possesses a pedagogical process referred to as *shuhari* (守破離) [Reilly 1998: 94-95; Budden 2000: 7; Sidney 2003: 175] in which *shu*, *ha*, and *ri* refer to *observing*, *breaking away*, and *transcending*, respectfully. Donohue [2005] states *shu*, *ha*, and *ri* are “concepts which suggest that students must first master the basics of the art before they are able to grasp the underlying principles of master” (24). Donohue thus implies that *shuhari* is a pedagogical process.

The origin of the *shuhari* pedagogy is unclear, but it most likely developed during Japan's Muromachi (or

Ashikaga) Period (1336-1573) [Tomozoe, Wada 1993]. This three-stage learning process possesses Confucian and Buddhist educational approaches [Kang, Kim 2005] and “has been substantially shaped by Zen practice” [Platts 1999: 156]. Japanese artisans most likely adopted the *shuhari* concept found in Buddhist pedagogy to explain the learning experiences that occur in Noh theater, the tea ceremony (*chanoyu*, 茶の湯), or flower arranging (*ikebana*, 生け花), which are all traditions that predate modern martial arts. It would only be natural for Japanese martial artists to borrow terminology from one art form to explain their skill acquisition process, and indeed Zen Buddhism and *budō* have identical learning processes [Deshimaru 1982: 16]. While Friday and Humitake [1997] believe this classification of *shuhari* is modern fiction, often misrepresented, and lacks historical understanding, the majority of literature seems to have adopted the terminology and concept.

Kang and Kim [2005] established that *shuhari* is found in Korean martial arts. Students begin by following their instructors’ methods and techniques precisely (i.e., observe and emulate their instructor) at the *shu* level. TKD students must thus emulate their teachers’ physical motions to learn the art’s physical skills during the *musul* stage. Students enter *ha* when they experiment and establish a more personal method of performing the art (i.e., to break away from their instructors’ methodologies). Consequently, *ha* resembles the *muye* level of the TKD pedagogical process, since both call for personal interpretations of the art. After many more years of practice, Japanese martial artists should “move with total autonomy” [Sakai, Bennett 2010: 119]. At this, the *ri* stage, practitioners “steal” [DeCorker 1998: 78] or transcend the art [Reilly 1998: 95]. In other words, practitioners move beyond the physical aspects of the learned art and possess “a more personal understanding of their art” [DeCorker 1998: 78] in which its lessons can be applied to everyday life [Koch n.d.]. Thus, the martial arts lessons have transcended from its physical lessons and subsequent artistic displays of the art to impact the practitioners’ lives outside of martial arts practice, which is akin in concept to *mudo*.

Adding to the *shuhari* process, Stevens [2002] states the highest stage of *budō* practice is *shin* (心, *spirit*), in which a cosmology can be achieved through martial art practice (110). Donohue [2005] disagrees: “While it is certainly possible that this connection was important for selected martial artists, it is neither universal nor historically accurate” (13). More importantly to the current study, some, but not all, TKD practitioners have claimed religious spiritual development through their practice [Dziwenka 2014]. Therefore, a religious end, similar to that propagated by the Olympic TKD organizations, can be achieved through practice, but the practitioner must

make that a personal goal as it is not an innate part of the skill acquisition process.

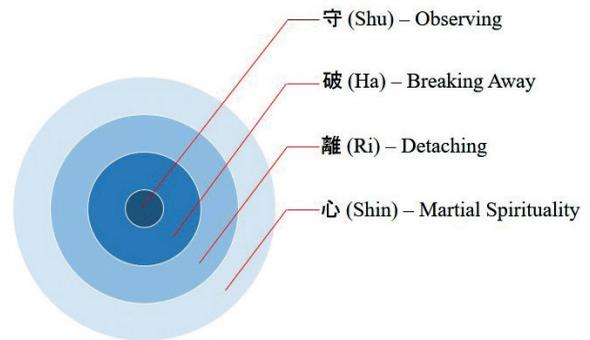


Figure 2. Pedagogical process of Japanese martial arts depicted in a concentric circle as suggested by Koch [n.d.] and Reilly [1998] with Stevens’ [2002] fourth level, *shin* (心, *martial spirit*), included.

The aforementioned Dreyfus model has been likened to the *shuhari* process [Parameswaran 2011]. Analogous to Sennett [2008], Koch [n.d.] also compares the *shuhari* experience to the stages of learning undertaken by craftsmen and artisans. As depicted in Figure 2, Koch [n.d.] states “there is Shu within Ha and both Shu and Ha within Ri,” which can be represented as a concentric circle. *Shuhari* may not be procedural per se, since it is influenced and intertwined with each other [Koch n.d.]. This concentric nature creates a dissimilarity between it and the Korean *musul-muye-mudo* process, which was determined to be procedural in nature.

Conclusions

The primary limitation of this research is that not all references on TKD, the *-do* suffix, spirituality, and education were consulted. Lengthier comparisons of Taoist, Buddhist, and Confucian of the Tao may additionally illuminate other aspects of TKD’s learning process as all three belief systems have influenced TKD. Also, many of the studies on *musul*, *muye*, and *mudo* are in Korean, which prevented a complete review of literature on the subject.

Nevertheless, several conclusions can be drawn from this interpretation of *musul*, *muye*, and *mudo*. Most importantly, this paper illustrates for the first time the pedagogical progression TKD practitioners undergo. This theory has practical value, because instructors can now establish long-term learning objectives and demystify TKD education. The *musul-muye-mudo* process can be used to set quantitative short-term class goals that could help achieve long-term learning objectives for TKD practitioners, which could facilitate learning [Savage, Savage, Armstrong 2006]. Knowing the purposes for and the end results of an educational process (i.e., knowing

the learning objectives) allows learners to develop the metacognitive skills [Carnegie 2015] needed to transcend to the *muye* and *mudo* levels, provides structure to the learning process for all involved, and could give numerous other benefits to instructors [Simon, Taylor 2009].

This pedagogical process also distinguishes Korean *mudo* from Japanese *budō*. As Korean *mudo* is stratified and Japanese *budō* is concentric, the learning processes are similar, yet distinct enough to determine one from the other. It is relevant to note that the learning objectives are nearly identical, especially if one correlates the potential spiritual level of *mudo* with Steven's proposed fourth level of the *shuhari* process. How and why the two processes are different requires further investigation.

Finally, this pedagogical interpretation of *mudo* explains how more than one way of interpreting *Do* is possible. While it is interesting to note that sports TKD seems to follow a more Taoist perspective of *mudo* while martial art TKD follows a Confucian understanding, the *Do* of Taekwon was shown to be the culmination of a years-long effort toward character, social, and/or spiritual development. This paper, therefore, does not negate previous attempts to understand *Do*; rather, it validates all of them.

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