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Budo (the martial arts) as Japanese culture. The outlook on the techniques and the outlook on the human being

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Summary

This study clarified about outlook on the technology and outlook on human being in the Budo as the Japanese culture. I considered in particular the problem of mind and body from *Syugyo* (Life training) that assumed Japanese traditional thought a background such as the Buddhism.

A way of thinking – Devotion, Evaluating oneself, experimentation, comprehension, Self-understanding, Training, Various relative phenomena and the sole absolute truth – of *Syugyo* (Life training) in Budo is to raise a state of a mind of self through the experience of *Syugyo* (Life training).

In other words, the *Keiko* (*lesson*), that we learn the technique of Budo and assume a thing of the self is to make the movement of „the body” agree with the work of „the mind”.

The body which does not come to go just as want is opposed to a mind. The body shows object characteristics for the mind as the subject in this sense.

It is to overcome the opposition of this subject/object practically to make a body agree with mind in a *Keiko* (*lesson*). In other words it mean that it make a body the subject.

It may be said that this is right practical understanding of one mind and body which we are aware of with a body.

The consideration of the problem of mind and body caught by the technique and the *Syugyo* (Life training) of the martial arts like this did Buddhism Japanese traditional thought with a background.

Key words: *Keiko* (*lesson*) • *Syugyo* (*Life training*) • Techniques of Budo • The Body and The mind

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BACKGROUND

Historically, the meaning of the term Budo has had a very broad meaning. Today, Budo is still used in a broad way, in that there is still a tendency for it to be used to define a culture of spirituality and moral values [1]. Therefore, the tradition has been maintained into the modern day.

Over time, Budo has had many philosophical concepts, depending on the era which one focuses upon. It has been a path of military technique, religious ideology, and experiential philosophy. Although, the concept of Budo has been argued about from many points of view, it has not yet been clearly defined. The ambiguity of Budo is mainly due to the traditional Japanese way of thinking. The most important aspect is how the Japanese approach the problem of gaining skill with respect to physical problems from the traditional ways of thought. Ancient Japanese think of the traditional arts and Budo as methods of improving people's physical skill and personalities. Ancient philosophy influenced the way Japanese think with respect to modern Budo as a method to gain moral values. This paper discusses (the problems of mind and body with respect to the characteristics of Budo skills) and how these skills as life lessons (*shugyo*).

BUDO TECHNIQUES

Budo's characteristics due to the presence of an opponent

The characteristic of Budo is that it is a martial sport due to its movement patterns. These patterns exist because an individual struggles in competition with an opponent. A technique of sports in which one fights against an opponent means that a person develops their skill through the interaction with the opponent, not by singular activity. Due to this fact, Budo as an activity has a complicated structure.

To explain, the techniques of striking or throwing an opponent (stance, posture, how to move) requires an opponent for the skill development. One cannot practice these attributes on oneself. On the other hand, there are techniques which are for finding an opening, or making an opening on the opponent during the struggle and its changes. Also, there are countering techniques for avoiding one's opponent's techniques and delivering one's own strike or throw. The techniques of Budo are a combination of all of the above techniques. When an individual participates in Budo, the technique that is applied to the opponent is determined at the instant that the opponent presents an opportunity. This opportunity comes about due to the relationship of the movements between one opponent and the other. In addition, one's movement must be made effectively and logically at every single moment.

You can't ignore how the other players are doing in individual sports like track and field and swimming. However, you do not have to respond to their techniques in your own play or movement. One must simply do their best. While in Budo, the play of your opponent determines your movements (sometimes one is not going to change one's own moves in response). In addition, one's move or change in moves can become quite complicated. One's moves are varied and complicated due to the timing and spacing in rela-

tion to the opponent's timing and spacing. Due to this aspect of Budo the possibilities become infinite.

There is a strong emphasis on psychological factors when one teaches or learns Budo techniques. The logic of one's mind and the spirit of one's heart are united in Budo. This is found as well, in ancient Budo sayings such as, "the incorporation of techniques and mind (*Jiri-ittai*)", "the agreement of the heart, the spirit and the power (*Sin-Ki-Ryoku-icchi*)". In Budo one gets nervous and physically tight in response to one's opponent on a moment to moment basis. The original form of Budo is a military art. The maturity of one's mind is essential in order to make it through critical situations. This allows for the learning of techniques and their applications in such situation, through experience. The state of mind that allows one to overcome their nerves in critical situations is thus emphasized in Budo.

The Kata (forms)

Japanese culture is called the culture of form. At the core of the culture are techniques handed down generation by generation since ancient times through constant training in the forms. Japanese culture, in terms of form, can be seen as demonstrated in arts such as Noh, Tea Ceremony (*Sado*) martial arts (*Budo*) and in the singing of songs. These arts are handed down through their forms. In martial arts, the forms are expressed as the sword (*Tachi*), the set (*Kumi*), the case (*Kaku*), and the mindset (*Seiho*) [2]. The core principle of practice is the practice of *Kata*. *Kata* is a form of physical folklore in a condensed version, simplified to exhibit no excess movements. It is "the specified mold [3]" which has been invented from many years of trial and error experiences. The first step of studying and guidance of a student is to have to watch and imitate the forms they see in the case of the Japanese arts. It is strictly required to adhere to respect and follow the forms in learning Budo technique.

With respect to modern Judo and Kendo, these sports are heading towards developing more rational techniques. Thus, two opponents try to use techniques on each other in a free and open manner. Whereas, before, the opponents used the forms of *Kata*-Budo. Although, this being said, *Kata* is still practiced as an important element in modern Budo.

In the example of Kyudo, the forms and practices have not changed from ancient to modern times. Marksmanship, without the tradition of *Kata* is unthinkable. In the modern day, there are set forms in Kendo and Judo.

There is *Kata* which were specified respectively today in Judo and Kendo and it occupies an important position in these arts. The strongly held viewpoint exists that states, some *Kata*'s sense of values in form beauty, to the posture and the attitude, and the evaluation of the valid skill and so on.

Formalizing the techniques creates a standardized form of effective techniques and turns these into the basic movement of the sport. This ignores the element of individuality and can hinder the development of unique forms. Thus, the effective movements become formalized practices. Formalization of movements should be separated completely from techniques. It prohibits the individualization of techniques in modern Kendo and Judo.

Formalization of the techniques and forms of Budo seem to have different aspects. Forms in Budo have been developed over a long period of struggles. Although they have been extremely simplified, they are sophisticated in function and form. To master the forms, one becomes “enlightened”. Unique and creative techniques can be performed when one learns set forms in a repetitive and devoted manner. Through this kind of practice, the forms can become integrated into oneself until they become instinctive. This is the tradition of Japanese sports culture [4].

In Budo, techniques and mindset are integrated. Learning and developing the techniques occurs alongside developing the mindset. The two are inseparable.

This paper now discusses the characteristics of Budo from the point of view of the uniqueness of its techniques. There has not been a clear concept of techniques and skill in Japan. The definitions and use of techniques and skill are still mixed and misunderstood to this day.

There are three points to discuss [5]:

1. Budo has been practiced in order to make oneself mold to the forms, instead of analyzing them.
2. The feel of the movement has core concepts that can not be analyzed (*ma*, *kokyu*, *ki*). These are incorporated into techniques like attack (*seme*) and destroying (*kuzushi*) against one’s opponent. These are learned until they become instinct through *Kata* practice.
3. Budo techniques are not learned by analyzing and extracting the movements. They are learned physically, through *Kata* practice. Techniques are controlled by standards of beauty. The technical movements have to have artistic value. This is not beauty dictating function, but the function and utility of a technique installing beauty into the form.
4. There is an infinite power in subtle movements and beauty in controlled movements. By mastering the skills, the movements become simplified, without wasting movement or power. After all, the techniques become subtle enough to become “invisible” (i.e. techniques of no technique) [6].

SHUGYO (LIFE TRAINING)

Practices in Budo are generally called *keiko* or *shugyo*. *Shugyo* has an important significance in the Japanese mindset, especially regarding the problems of mind and body. *Shugyo*, in general, means practical training to improve one’s own spirit and personality. In other words, “matter and logic and body and spirit” are inseparable. In addition, they have the characteristic of “nothingness”. Learning the *Kata* is learning the spirit. The secret of Budo is to integrate mind and form, matter and logic, and body and spirit. It is the characteristic of nothingness. Therefore, through physical training, practice has the purpose of training the spirit and the improvement of the personality in actual life.

Although, the concept of “practice” (*Renshu*) or training is close to that of *shugyo* or *keiko*, they cannot be the same. Practice and training mean to set a goal, repeating movements in order to reach the goal, and progress via the effort. The progress is shown by time completed in training. The concept of *shugyo* and *keiko* involves a mindset

like when one learns *Kata* and the mindset of preparing to practice. Additionally, this means the mindset of how one lives one’s own life.

Shugyo, in Budo and the other Japanese Arts, is to repeat set forms and to maintain the attitude of self-discipline. It is to cultivate one’s inner self [7], describes *shugyo* as, “to live with a strict life standard with self-discipline everyday”. That is to live a better life than the average human who is lost in society (i.e. *Leben mehr alles*).

Devotion (focus)

**Zeami*, whose excellent Noh theory in *Fushikadan*, stated, “One who is trying to attain this path should not walk the way that is not correct [8]”. One should not do anything but Noh. One should devote oneself to Noh. *Zeami* tells us how to behave or how to live one’s life. “Never lust, gamble, or drink heavily, as these are triple admonitions, which are rules to live by for a lifetime. Training should be hard and not have a weakness of heart [9]”. The path one should devote oneself to is not only when one is practicing, but in everyday life as well. The path has to be followed when one does chores, wakes in the morning, walks, and sleeps. If one pursues one path and reaches its end, one will know all paths. *Musashi Miyamoto* states in his *Book of Five Rings (Gorin-no-sho)*, “One does not need a teacher if one accomplishes the ways of all arts with the art of war (*Heiho*) [9]”.

Evaluating oneself, experimentation, comprehension

Experimentation and planning have a significant role in the *keiko* of repeating set *Katas* as one follows the teacher’s instructions. *Zeami* repeatedly emphasizes “It is impossible the actor who does not devise it for one’s flower has a long it with a flower, and to continue blooming even if it is an expert.”

The important thing for those who walk “the path” is to evaluate oneself honestly, be humble, and not to be egoistic. Additionally, one asks the questions of these attributes everyday. This type of attitude is always mentioned with respect to learning the Japanese Arts.

The book *Men Heiho no Ki* states, “One needs to train oneself every night and day, following “the teaching”. Ask about the parts one doubts tens and hundreds of times, even though it is hard to ask [10]. There should be no doubt in one’s mind. There is no other way to master an art than training oneself night and day.

Selflessness, self-effacement

*Dogen** emphasized this point for those who learn paths, “Not to have a desire for fame if possible. The admonition of ego, self indulgence, selfishness, and stubbornness are found in books of martial arts secrets”. Next, one can take the teachings of predecessors and teachers naturally, as if a mirror reflects objects. It is indispensable to have the mindset of unselfishness and abandoning oneself for those who learn paths. One needs to learn the spirit of selflessness under the right teacher. It is absolutely important to have a “positive” teacher. One can learn the techniques by devoting oneself to endless practice of the techniques with self-



lessness. At that time, one becomes one with the path and establishes the true self.

Shugyo is to learn a set form by abandoning the self, evaluating oneself, and repetitive practice. It is to actually do and learn. Matter and logic, form and heart, and mind and body become one. In this manner one learns automatically. That is when truly unique and creative art is established [11]. By repeating the practice of set forms, free and creative techniques are established.

BODY-CONCLUSIONS

I have discussed the characteristics of techniques and *shugyo*. There is a physical problem in traditional Japanese philosophy. Mind and body are one and inseparable in oriental philosophy. The summary of this paper is about the view of the and the view of the human being in which mind and body are one. *Shugyo*, in Budo is not just learning techniques, but to improve the personality through the process expands one's mind and spirit to a higher stage. This is accomplished through the experience of *shugyo* in Budo. It is one type of enlightenment.

This is all in one with one's body. Real art can be developed by the body through long, hard, practice, not through merely understanding the ideas [7].

Shugyo begins by molding one's own body to the form and correcting one's mindset. In other words, it is training to mold one's body into a certain form. By physically training the body, one learns the form. Many martial arts books of secrets state that, the essential techniques cannot be obtained unless one trains the body through *shugyo*. "Although work comes from kinetic energy, one starts with potential energy [12], the energy merely transfers state. If one increases the quantity of *Shugyo*, work and energy gradually become one. Without painstaking work, one does not obtain this level [13].

The practice to study Budo's techniques and master them, means uniting the work of mind and movement of the body. In doing this, one experiences that one's body does not follow one's mind. The body is opposed to one's mind. In that sense, the body becomes the object while the mind becomes the subject. In *keiko*, to unite mind and body means to overcome the confrontation between subject and object and to make one's body to become subjective. That is to learn through the body with out consciousness. This is a practical understanding of the integration of mind and body. Consideration of the Budo techniques and *shugyo* and the mind and body is the basis of traditional philosophies such as Buddhism. Budo, as Japanese culture, needs to be examined deeply. Last, this paper offers *Zeami's* famous quote to be the conclusion of this paper.

"After it learns to the memory of individual regulations of the practice and various thing imitations and logical all-out, and it devises it firmly, it is necessary to feel everything in this stage for years. It should be the mind learned to study various things thoroughly, that is, lower seed. Therefore, if it knows the flower, it is first of all and as for the seed. 'The flower is a mind, and the seed is a technique' [14]. " What *Zeami* means, is "the flower" is an essence of arts to be learned. The seed that makes the flower is technique, His quote "flower is mind and seed is technique" is too opposed to the authors overall idea. From the standpoint of reaching an object through the subject, mind has to be a seed and techniques have to become a flower to bloom. If mind is the subject, the techniques should be the object, the quote should read, "seed is mind, and the flower is technique". The reason *Zeami* said "flower is mind, seed is technique" is that techniques can naturally be learned physically, through *shugyo*. The heart of the "way of arts" can become truly one's own through the body.

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