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KENDO: BETWEEN “RELIGION” AND “NATIONALISM”

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Abstract: To date, the study of “religion” and “martial arts” is a lacuna of the field in Religious Studies in which the depth of association has long gone unrecognised. What little study there is, however, suffers from a practitioner’s bias in that those writing on martial arts are also attempting to promote the agenda of their own discipline. This paper attempts a more critical approach to show the study of martial arts can contribute to the ongoing problematisation of “religion” as an analytic category, particularly in its relation to “the secular” and “nationalism”. To do this I will draw on the philosophical phenomenology of Husserl, Sartre and Schutz to argue that “religions”, “nationalisms” and “martial arts” are all names given to modes of naturalisation. By this I mean they are means by which a person “fits” within their life-world and deals with the problems of surviving and thriving.

Key Words: Religion; Nationalism; Kendo; Martial Arts; Phenomenology; Japan; Samurai.

To date, the study of “religion” and “martial arts” is a lacuna of the field in Religious Studies¹. As observed by Michael Maliszewski, „the depth of association that many of these disciplines had with specific religious traditions has gone unrecognised”² within academia. However, Maliszewski also contributes as to why this has been the case. There is a problem with the study of martial arts similar to that identified by Markus Davidsen³ in the case of “spiritual studies”: many of the scholars involved in the topic are themselves practitioners and their works betrays normative, apologetic agendas.⁴ As commented by Alexander Bennett: “A growing number of English books about traditional Japanese swordsmanship are on the market. Most of them, however, are how-to manuals, biographies of master swordsmen, or translations and commentaries on classic texts – often historically naïve, mixing fact with fiction”⁵. As practitioners themselves, these scholars have tended to underplay certain historical factors in the development of their martial arts that might portray them in a negative light. Maliszewski’s *Spiritual Dimensions of the Martial Arts*, is a prime example of this: “The lack of serious attention by practitioners of these disciplines as well as scholar’s lack of attention to or participation in the martial arts is a central theme addressed in this book”⁶. Blurring the lines between scholar and practitioner, this comment and more indicate an Eliadean style of study – i.e. one which presumes a transhistorical essence which martial arts contribute to manifesting.⁷ Not only is Maliszewski looking to rectifying a scholarly lacuna, it becomes clear that he is evaluating the martial arts themselves for how well they have manifested this transhistorical spiritual essence.

It is my attention to get out of this trap and show how the study of martial arts can help contribute in a critical manner to the ongoing problematisation of “religion” as an analytic category and its relation to such concepts as “the secular” and “nationalism”⁸. One of the key faults involved here is how we use the term “spiritual” which, as Fitzgerald’s work highlights, carries a Christian bias that would make connections with a metaphysical realm and presupposing the natural/supernatural divide which underpins much of Western European⁹ thought. Moreover, this Christo-centric usage reinforces the secular/religious binary, one which sees “secular” as public and “religion” as private. But in recent debates on the sportification of martial arts, Taekwondo’s presence in the Olympics being a notable example, one of the consistent themes of critics is how the emphasis on sport degenerates the spiritual aspects of their disciplines. Yet their usage of “spirit” and “spiritual” then runs counter to Christo-centric understanding, in their usage a martial art is “public” and a sport is “private.”

This “public” nature of martial arts has been demonstrated by Bennett in the case of Kendo when demonstrating that the development of the martial art is bound up with Japanese notions of nationalism. With this

paper I intend to extend Bennett’s work to show the relation of Kendo to the category of “religion”. Specifically, by drawing on the philosophical phenomenology of Husserl, Sartre and Schutz, I want to frame this discussion in terms of *naturalisation*: how a person “fits” within their life-world. As I will argue here, Kendo, and martial arts more broadly, is a mode of naturalisation. “Religion” and “nationalism” have then been used as a means to *categorise* this mode. What I want to shift away from here is an approach to religion which has been best articulated in the words of Ann Taves¹⁰ as “things deemed religious”. Such an approach is concerned with the proper classification of things “out there”, most often expressed in terms of whether they are “natural” or “supernatural”. By looking at naturalisation I want to shift focus to “*people* deemed religious”. As I see it, “religion” is a tool of Othering. Broadly put, this means that when we speak of “nationalism” we are referring to the dominant mode of naturalisation of that group and when we speak of “religion” we picked out a non-dominant mode. In this regard my argument is influenced by Naomi Goldenberg’s work on religion as vestigial states¹¹. By looking at the case of Kendo, as a mode of naturalisation, we can see how fluidly these effectively *ideological* categorisations can shift and change.

“Religion” as naturalisation

Commonly perceived, martial arts are systems of combat that have heralded from the East Asian countries of China, Japan, Korea, etc.¹ This association with East Asia and particularly these countries as the sources for traditions that we now refer to as Daoism, Confucianism, Buddhism, Shinto and loosely organised (by scholars, that is) folk beliefs, presents difficulties for our understanding of “religion” as a cross-cultural analytic category. Speaking of the case of China, for instance, Joachim Gentz has commented that an assumption by early scholars was that

The traditions of Chinese religions were not clearly distinct. They seemed to share a common character, so were often referred to as *the* Chinese religion – in the singular. Scholars have tried to identify Chinese Daoism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Islam and popular religions as variants of one big unified system of Chinese religion called Chinese universism.¹²

There is, for example, the common Chinese adage about performing Taoist rituals in the morning, attending Confucian meetings in the afternoon and entertaining Buddhist contemplation in the evening¹³. This lack of distinction between traditions does not fit well with the Western understanding of “religion,” influenced by its Christian heritage which expects a certain degree of exclusivity within each religion. I will now

draw out some of the implications of Gentz’s own argument as a means of setting up my own approach to “religion”. At the same time, this will also help introduce some of the traditions which have influenced Kendo and how I understand that influence to have worked.

The basic premise from which I am proceeding from is that starting with “religion” as the basic given is the wrong one. There is no correspondent word in either Chinese, Japanese or Korean for this English word until as late as 1860 when the Japanese introduced the word *shūkyō* and which was subsequently adapted into *zongjiao* by the Chinese¹⁴. Speaking of “religion” before the introduction of these terms is deeply problematic. Take, for instance, Gentz’ comment that ‘*zongjiao* does not reflect the pre-modern understanding of religion in China’¹⁵. There can only be a pre-modern understanding of “religion” if we are back-reading the very modern understanding we are trying to avoid. Gentz in his own discussion attempts to capture this “pre-modern” understanding through the term *sanjiao* (Three Teachings) which came into usage around the fourth century CE and refers to Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism. There are aspects to the term that are both conducive and detrimental to the argument I wish to make here. Positively, *sanjiao* clearly highlights in Chinese discourse three competitive, though not necessarily combative, traditions which were united in a common purpose; a point which is often traced back to the *I Ching* (circa. 8th century BCE) where it is claimed: “Different paths lead to the same goal.” Negatively, Gentz develops this point into the following understanding of pre-modern “religion” in China as containing three elements: ‘*dao*, the nameless that religions deal with; sages, *sheng*, human incarnations with insight into this *dao*; and teachings *jiao*, that are instrumental to save living beings’¹⁶. The main problem here is the connection of “*dao*” with the “nameless” and “*jiao*” with “salvation” – two Western, Christian influenced (Ottonian) notions. What I propose instead is that if any term is to be taken as central and constitutive when considering the various traditions of Buddhism, Confucianism and Daoism it is not “religion,” but “*dao*”—and “*do*” after transposition to Japan. Specifically, rather than making an association with some obscure “nameless,” we should focus on the term’s translation as “Way” or “path”. That is, the *dao* does not refer to a thing, but a *doing*.

Following the phenomenology of Alfred Schutz, people are constantly “problem solving.”¹⁷ All our actions are determined by a prevailing *problem at hand* which determines what aspects of the life-world are picked out as relevant. So, if our interest is the p-being of S then what is not brought to mind is that S is also q, r, and other things as well as p and so really we should say “S is, among many other things such as q and r, also p.” He thus points out that if I assert “S is p” ‘I do so because for my purpose at hand at this particular moment I am interested only in the p-being of S and am disregarding as not relevant to such purpose the fact that S is also q and r’.¹⁸ We are able to do this “disregarding” through the

utilisation of provinces of meaning. Each province can be considered as a set of rules which determine how I got about solving a particular problem, as well as a stock of knowledge of previous experience to help inform this problem solving.¹⁹ As Schutz understood it, Husserl’s natural attitude is in fact the most fundamental province of meaning concerned with the problem of surviving and thriving.²⁰ Every other province of meaning is then derivative upon this—a specification—and are thus arranged in (subjective) hierarchies of importance.

“*Dao*,” I suggest, is a term, among many others, that identifies a particular province of meaning. Specifically, as there are various *dao* in the Chinese context it refers to a particular *type* of province—i.e. a set of provinces with an identifiable commonality which, as the *I Ching* suggests, is to be found in a shared goal. But unlike Gentz, this commonality is not a shared reference to something nameless or to salvation, rather it is to the fact that these particular provinces *naturalise* the person in their life-world. That is, to naturalise someone is to make them “fit” within their life-world, including establishing them in social context—i.e. their relation and position to Others—in which they find themselves.²¹ As suggested above, Schutz saw this in terms of the fundamental problem of surviving and thriving. More recently, Sheets-Johnstone has drawn on the work of Sartre to make a similar point regards “religion”. She argues that the purpose of “religion” is to stabilise feelings of *ease* with the world²². More specifically, systems like “religion” (and “nationalism”) address certain existential anxieties—particularly the fear of death—by providing security, safety and the chance for well-being, and so enable us to carry on with our lives²³. Without such systems we would effectively be too afraid to live. As such, “*Dao*” as I am understanding it here designates a means of being at with one’s life-world.

Important in this context is the relation of the various *dao* to “*sanjiao*.” A *jiao*, I suggest, is a state sanctioned *dao*. To a certain extent this can be read through in Gentz’s account:

Instead of questions about truth there were concerns about canonicity, orthodoxy and heresy. In the interreligious discourses issues of legitimacy, hierarchy, and superiority played a major role, yet the status of a religion as a *jiao* or *dao* was never questioned. Even an “outer way” (*waidao*) was still a *dao* and a mundane teaching (*shijiao*) still a *jiao*. Similarly the state did not show any interest in defining true religiosity.²⁴

The point here, as he suggests, is that ultimate Truth is not the main issue, legitimacy and orthodoxy are. Framed in Schutzian terms this is to indicate a society’s concern with its own surviving and thriving. In a number of places Gentz highlights the state function of Buddhist priests,

for instance. And in quoting a Qing dynasty anti-heresy law he notes that ‘the greatest perceived threat of such practices was that they mislead and stirred up the people’²⁵. The emphasis here is on ensuring that people do not disrupt the day-to-day running of the empire—they fit within the general structure of Chinese society. There is even a caveat in the edict which allows room for some of these rituals so long as they take place *outside* of harvest season—i.e. when the people are not working directly for the benefit of the State. To be more specific, in this context a *jiao* is a *dao* that not only handles the surviving and thriving of the person, it also handles the surviving and thriving of the wider society. The *sanjiao*—Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism—refer to the Chinese State (group) sanctioned *dao* by which a person may naturalise themselves. These sanctioned *dao* were then disseminated through such institutions as the Ministry of Rites that oversaw the regulation of Daoist and Buddhist monasteries, as well state examinations and official etiquette²⁶.

Insofar as “religion” can have any traction as an analytic concept in this context it cannot be that religion supplies “Truth” as Gentz’s comments imply. Rather, “religion” makes sense as a choice: the Chinese had available to them different *dao* by which they could naturalise themselves within Chinese society. But this choice is limited to three options, Christianity was never a “religion” in this pre-modern context because it was never canonised as a *jiao* (2013, 5-6).²⁷

However, another way of looking at *dao* and *jiao* is to say that a part of *being* Chinese is to follow one of the *jiao*. That is, to use the idea of Chinese universalism, there is a monothetic province of meaning—“Chinese”—which naturalises the person in their life-world. This monothetic unity is composed of various polythetic constituents, subprovinces—Confucianism, Buddhism, Daoism—that aid in the constitution of this province²⁸. That is to say, in order to be Chinese one must practice one of these three traditions. In this regard we might describe them as nationalistic rather than religious. However, this would not be full blown nationalism as such. This would require a degree of *exclusivity*: In order to be Chinese one must practice Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism, *and* only the Chinese can practice these properly. That is, in order for us to speak of nationalism here the Chinese would also need to make the claim that only they can naturalise themselves via these modes—they “belong” to the Chinese. While there is probably little evidence to justify this view in the case of China, with regard to Japan and Kendo we can definitely see this as a form of nationalism.

The transition from “nationalism” to “religion”—to further specify on my earlier definition—indicates the loss of this “belonging to” a particular group. We may, tentatively speak of a secularisation whereby the province of “Kendo” ceases to be a sub-province and becomes a monothetic unity in its own right. John Donohue, for instance, has written on the transposition of martial arts to America²⁹. In such a context it

would make little sense for American practitioners to identify themselves as Japanese by the practice of Kendo. In this respect there are some similarities with my understanding of “religion” as an analytic concept with Naomi Goldenberg’s argument that religions are vestigial states: ‘cultural remnants of former sovereignties that persist within current states (current governmental jurisdictions)’³⁰. I will say more on this later.

“Spirituality” as seriousness

Kendo, I will suggest in the next section, can be seen as competitors to Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism in that they offer alternative Ways—means of naturalising a person in their life-world. As mentioned in the introduction, one of the ways this can be evinced is the ongoing discussions among martial arts practitioners over the question of “sportification.” The issue, as it is presented in discourse, is that in promoting these disciplines as “sports” as opposed to “arts,” some crucial aspect is thereby lost. Crucially, the term often deployed in this context is “spirit” or “spiritual” as that which is lost. Based on my understanding of “religion” as a non-dominant mode of naturalisation I want to be clear how this term fits with the veral argument.

In order to do this we actually first need a definition of “martial art”. Commonly understand, the term is a translation, stemming from the early 1900s, of the Japanese term *bujutsu*. However, while “*bu*” is translated as “martial,” “*jutsu*” can be translated as “art,” “method,” “skill,” and “technique.” Kiyota translates it as “martial skill”³¹ and Bennett uses “martial technique”³². As we will see below, considering the context in which the term emerged these are the more accurate translations. *Bujutsu* refers to systems and techniques of fighting that were used by samurai in real combat situations. *Bujutsu*, then, refers to *martial craft* where “craft” refers to a set of functional skills. These *bujutsu* then developed into *budo*, a term that came into popular use circa. 1868–1912 and is also translated as “martial art.” Thus, for example, *kenjutsu* as referring to a specific set of sword skills became *kendo*. Again, however, “*do*” is more accurately translated as “way” rather than “art”. Indeed, the most direct term, *bugei*, is in fact one of the least common terms used to describe Japanese martial arts. Further, the English “martial art” seems to be derived from the Latin (“Art of Mars”) and was in use from the 1550s as a synonym for “fencing,” some fifty years before the arrival of the first Britain in Japan³³. There is thus a translation issue as a single English term is used for what, for the Japanese, are three separate things. Indeed, the introduction of various *bujutsu* to Europe seems to have coincided with the development of various *budo* from 1868 onward³⁴.

The key to speaking of Kendo as a mode of naturalisation is in this transition from *bujutsu* to *budo*—which I will continue to translate as martial arts. The change of terminology indicates a change in the way in

which the skills of these various *bujutsu* were perceived and practiced. Primarily, this is a move away from battlefield application. But, the obvious question, a move to what? Authors like Kiyota and Mileszewski see this as the “spiritualisation” of these combat systems³⁵. Specifically, the introduction of the suffix “do” carries with it significant connotations, especially when translated as “Way.” For Kiyota, the term signifies a “way of life”:

Thus *kendo* (*ken+dō*) does not only mean the development of skill; it ultimately means the way of life shaped by the discipline cultivated in the process of learning that art. *Dō*, in the Japanese context, is an experiential term, experiential in the sense that practice (the way of life) is the norm to verify the validity of the discipline cultivated through a given art form. In *kendo*, then, discipline refers to *kendō* practice which is designed to cultivate *mushin* (and revealed as *heijō-shin*). But since the term “*dō*” is an experiential term, *kendo* requires the implementation of *heijō-shin* in every walk of life.³⁶

It is this final part which captures what I wish to suggest by speaking of martial arts as modes of naturalisation.

Whatever else may be attached, to the term “spiritual” by the person using it, insofar as it is used here, I take it to mean something *serious*. Drawing on Sartrean phenomenology, I am following his distinction between the “serious attitude” (related to the natural attitude) and “play”: ‘The serious attitude involves starting from the world and attributing more reality to the world than to oneself; at the very least the serious man confers reality on himself to the degree to which he belongs to the world’; and ‘The first principle of play is man himself; through it he escapes his natural nature; he himself sets the value and rules for his acts and consents to play only according to the rules which he himself has established and defined’³⁷. Relating this to Schutz’s discussion of provinces of meaning, it should be recalled that provinces are specifications on the natural attitude. In this respect they form hierarchies of relevance based on how much they contribute to the fundamental problem of surviving and thriving. Thus, those provinces that are most directly related to the problem of surviving and thriving are serious in the Sartrean sense and become more playful the further away they are from this problem.

In the debates the on the “sportification” of martial arts, the worry expressed by practitioners is that what they take to be a serious province of meaning (Kendo) has become a playful one. Specifically, the use of “spiritual” marks that province out as serious, and the use of “sport” marks it out as play. This serious/play distinction is determined by the

applicability of the province. That is, if treated as a sport the particular martial art only has applicability within a limited context and only that context—i.e. the training hall and competition arena. By contrast, those who are resisting this sportification understand the applicability of this province of meaning to be relevant in more areas of the life-world; a point also played out in Bennett: ‘The argument surrounding the difference between budo and sports has always been vibrant, but the main objections are that kendo should never be reduced to a matter of victory or defeat and that it is not about fun or play. Kendo is supposed to be far more serious than that’³⁸. In speaking of them as modes of naturalisation, I am proposing that martial arts are “serious” for the practitioners and as such they become a means by which to “fit” within their life-world.

Kendo

Kendo as it is practiced now generally involves sword based combat using a *shinai* (bamboo stick) instead of real blades. The objective of kendo is to strike an opponent’s *bōgu* (armour) in prescribed target areas. What should be noted is that in its sole reliance on swords, Kendo differs from the majority of other martial arts which tend to rely on hand-to-hand combat. Literally translated, “Kendo” means “way of the sword”³⁹. The term’s earliest use seems to be by Abe Munetō in a document outlining his *ryūha* (school) – the *Abe-ryū kendo denshi* (1667). However, the term would not find popular usage until the 1920s and what now takes the name went by such names as *gekitō*, *gekiken*, *tachi-uchi*, *kenpō* and *kenjutsu*. However, while modern Kendo represents a unified system, these names do not refer to earlier iterations. We must be clear that there were many different *kenjutsu ryūha* each with their own distinctive style. Kendo, then is an invented tradition, in that ‘its teachings and training methodology, match rules, philosophical concepts, and so on were, for the most part developed or reformulated in the twentieth century’⁴⁰. Despite this, there is a modern perception that Kendo is ‘the purest of the martial arts – being easily linked to the honourable sword-wielding samurai heroes of yesteryear’⁴¹. As such, Kendo has become the dominant expression of *bushido* which has captured and determined the Japanese consciousness since the nationalism of the late Meiji Period. Indeed, within Japan it is the most widely practiced martial art, despite the greater international spread of Judo and Karate.

Samurai origins

While Kendo emerged in the twentieth century, its connection to *bushido* and *kenjutsu* mean that it traces its origin back to the establishment of the samurai during the Kamakura Shogunate in 1189. As explained by Motoki Yasuo, the samurai emerged during this time as

professional warriors, which distinguished them from other troops who were normally conscripts, who wielded political power which was passed on hereditarily⁴². The defining aspect of these samurai was the ethos of *bushido* which entailed ‘the willingness to face death and facing death willingly meant conquering fear’⁴³. This took shape as an utter devotion to one’s lord to the point of sacrificing their life for them if called upon. *Bushido* was, then, utterly serious in the Sartre-Schutzian sense, as it concerned itself with the fundamental problem of surviving and thriving. As noted by Bennett, however, such loyalty was ‘pragmatism cloaked in romanticism rather than a pure human bond’⁴⁴. “Honour,” during this period was a form of cultural capital,⁴⁵ enabling and bestowing certain privileges upon the samurai—i.e. thriving. Significantly, this capital was hereditary so that honour, and associated privileges, were passed from father to son.

This warrior class would develop long into the Sengoku period (Warring States) (1467-1603) which would see the high point of the samurai in terms of dominance. During this time, for instance, Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537-1598), temporarily Shogun and ruler of all Japan, issued the Sword Hunt Edict of 1588 in which farmers were obliged to relinquish their weapons. Although ultimately unsuccessful, the edict was among many attempts to solidify and maintain samurai dominance. And, as the name suggests, the Sengoku period is also marked predominantly by a loss of power by the emperor and increasing internal strife between feudal lords who engaged in open warfare for control of Japan. Ironically, Hideyoshi himself began life as a peasant before rising to effective ruler of the country and the edict was designed to prevent further conflict. During this period there was a distinctive systematisation of the various fighting techniques into martial crafts (*-jutsu*) that formed *ryūha*. This was primarily brought about by a shift of location, many samurai finding themselves out of rural settings and in urban areas where their rustic behaviours attracted scorn. This translocation included the dual development of both martial and civil skills that prompted the introduction of various “house codes” which laid out rules of etiquette and conduct for different clans of samurai.

The development of *ryūha* and the *dojo* (training hall) in which they were taught represents an effort not only toward systematisation but increased social standing. Importantly, many of these early *dojo* were associated with Shinto shrines or Buddhist temples⁴⁶. One of the first recorded *ryūha* was founded by Iizasa Chōisai (1387-1488) who was said to have developed his skills by inspiration from the Katori Shinto deity. In this respect, Kiyota describes a *dojo* as ‘a sacred site ... Usually a Shinto deity is enshrined in a *dōjō* as a symbolic representation of purity’⁴⁷. Alongside this Shinto connection, the term “*dojo*” indicates the influence of Buddhism on their promulgation. The term is a combination of “*dō*” (Way) and “*jō*” (site) and according to Kiyota is derived from the Buddhist

Sanskrit *bodhimanda*—the site of enlightenment. More exactly “*dō*” is related to the term “*mārga*” meaning “path”.⁴⁸ As such, “*dojo*” is more accurately described as a site where the Way is practiced/cultivated. As Bennett notes, ‘Training was far more than a physical pursuit; it was a kind of religious exercise encapsulated in the notion of *shugyō* (aesthetic training) – a term utilised in the worlds of both samurai and Buddhist monks’.⁴⁹ Donohue, for instance, speaks of the *zendo* where Zen Buddhism was practiced⁵⁰. This connection also meant that Buddhist monasteries developed their own *ryūha*. Indeed, both Buddhist monks and Shinto priests were known to have participated in the various conflicts during the Sengoku period in the form of Ikkō-ikki rebellions.

Karl Friday has suggested that these connections between religion (re. Buddhism and Shinto) and the emerging *ryūha* masked what was a fundamentally mundane practice⁵¹. In opposition to this view, Bennett has highlighted Clifford Geertz’ definition of religion and how it aptly applies in this context, concluding that: ‘the emphasis on highly symbolic rituals and divinely inspired techniques, combined with a medley of magical and polytheistic beliefs, sustained warriors in their quest for technical excellence and spiritual enlightenment’.⁵² He goes further to suggest that despite ‘specific religious affiliation, such as one of the various sects of Buddhism, the martial *ryūha* was akin to a religious cult in its own right’.⁵³ Returning to my comments in the introduction, it would not be entirely accurate to speak of either “religion” or “nationalism” quite yet. There are two ways of approaching this point: the first is to say that as martial craft these various *ryūha* were taken up as instrumental tools in the propagation and defence of pre-established modes of naturalisation—namely, the different sects of Buddhism. However, the second, is to lay emphasis on how these *ryūha* were in the sole hands of the samurai. Insofar as they did promote “spiritual enlightenment” for, and only for this particular social group, it could be said that they developed their own distinct means of naturalisation as a sub-group within broader Japanese society. This sense of a contradistinct group with its own means naturalisation would take further shape and definition after the end of the Sengoku period and the establishment of Tokugawa rule.

The “religion” of the samurai

With the establishment of the Tokugawa government and an end to the fighting, many samurai found themselves in a country that had no need of them. Many had lost their lords during the final stages of the conflict and so became unlanded, taking to wandering Japan as *ronin* (“wave man”). Without masters to rely on for subsistence, most of these warriors turned to other professions. At the same time, the Confucian system of the Tokugawa bureaucracy promoted the educational principle of *Bunbu Itchi*—“pen and sword in accord”.⁵⁴ As such, many newly

established lords were keen to establish *ryūha* in their castle towns for the purpose of training their family and retainers. Many *ronin* therefore attempted to establish *ryūha* of their own and duelling became a common occurrence as they tried to win renown enough to be noticed by a lord who would then enlist their services.

It was during this time that the various *kenjutsu ryūha* developed which would later become the basis of modern Kendo. Bennett’s own account of this part of history focuses on such samurai as Yagyū Munenori (1571-1646), who would come to hold high influence in Tokugawa politics, as part of his own argument of the relation of martial arts to Japanese nationalism. Instead, I will focus on the slightly more “mythic” figure of Miyamoto Musashi (1584-1645). There are numerous tales of Musashi’s exploits and during his life time he is reported to have fought in over sixty duels—the first of which was at the age of twelve/thirteen⁵⁵ against a much more experienced samurai—and never lost one. He also participated in the battle of Sekigahara (1600), a gruelling three day battle, seeing Tokugawa Ieyasu finally achieve victory and control of Japan, during which seventy thousand people were killed.⁵⁶ Only sixteen at the time, Musashi fought on the losing Ashikaga side and was able to escape the ensuing massacre of the defeated army.

Musashi spent the majority of his life after this wandering Japan developing his own distinctive sword style, often staying as a guest and sword teacher to a lord before moving on again. As Harris describes, during this time Musashi ‘devoted himself with a ferocious single-mindedness to the search for enlightenment by the Way of the sword’.⁵⁷ In this respect he was emblematic of a general shift among samurai to ‘an emphasis on the inner dimension of self-control’⁵⁸. Kiyota even goes so far as to describe Musashi as a mystic⁵⁹; this following Sallie King’s definition of mysticism: ‘a religious experience [or mystical experience] is an extraordinary moment of awareness or transformation of awareness which subsequently alters one’s mode of self-conscious being-in-the-world’⁶⁰. After years of wandering, Musashi retired in 1643 to a life of seclusion in a cave, fitting with the typical image of the secluded mystic. It was during this time in seclusion that he is purported to have written the *Gorinsho* (*A Book of Five Rings*) (circa. 1645), though it is possible the text was in fact compiled by his students after his death two years later. *A Book of Five Rings*, nevertheless, is a summary of his thought on the Way of the sword and is widely read among the various modern Kendo schools.

In its opening pages, Musashi both places himself in the current context of Japan and separates himself from it at the same time. To begin with he states: ‘I have been many years training in the Way of strategy’⁶¹. Harris’ translation highlights the link between the use of “do” and the Chinese “Tao” here. Certainly, in this sense the use of term fits in with the Confucian inspired bureaucracy of the Tokugawa. However, the suffix “-do” had in fact been in use since the early Heian period, but simply

denoted a specialisation and transmission of a specific skill set. As will become clear in a passage below, the way in which Musashi uses “do” is in relation to the term “*geidō*” which had been expressed in the realms of painting, theatre, flowering arranging, dance, and the tea ceremony. Introduced circa 1433, among the practitioners of these arts this new word indicated the inclusion of “spiritual” connotations to these specialisations:

Geidō became permeated with deeply spiritual meaning, and prodigies who reached a certain level of mastery would receive accolades and patronage from members of high society. To enhance and maintain their prestige, the masters of these arts codified their techniques and arcane knowledge (*hiden*) into systems and conveyed it only to select disciples.⁶²

Musashi’s own biography fits this same pattern. Not only does he situate himself in the Confucian outlook of the Tokugawa, in the same lines he also speaks of paying homage to heaven, thereby identifying with Shinto practices, and praying to Kwannon, goddess of mercy in Buddhism. Similarly, Kiyota notes that modern Kendo is influenced by Buddhism, Confucianism and Shinto, his own work focusing on the first as the most constitutive influence⁶³. Musashi’s work would seemingly fit in with this as *A Book of Five Rings* is divided into five sections which follow the *Go Dai*, the “Five Greats” (elements) of Buddhist cosmology: ground, water, fire, wind and void⁶⁴. But, significantly, in speaking of writing *A Book of Five Rings*, Musashi makes the further claim that ‘I did not use the law of Buddha or the teachings of Confucius, neither old war chronicles nor books in martial tactics. I take up this brush to explain the true spirit of this Ichi school as it is mirrored in the Way of Heaven and Kwannon’.⁶⁵

Following Bennett’s comment above, Musashi’s work can be seen as an attempt to instigate a separate “religious cult” to co-exist with Buddhist, Shinto and Confucian accounts of the Way. He states that ‘*The Way of the warrior does not include other Ways*, such as Confucianism, Buddhism, certain traditions, artistic accomplishments and dancing. But even though these are not part of the Way, if you know the Way broadly you will see it in everything. Men must polish their *particular Way*’.⁶⁶ In speaking of a particular Way, Musashi is in fact promoting his Way as *the* Way of a particular group of people—the samurai. It should be remembered that during this period the *ryūha* were the almost exclusive domain of that social group. In this sense, “spiritualisation” is also “naturalisation”: it is about developing a means for a particular social group to fit within the broader life-world. And in this particular case, one consistent with the new Tokugawa government.

In another context Donohue has pointed out how Kendo, as it has developed out of Musashi and other famous samurai, has taken shape in

the form as “*ken zen ichi*”—the goals of swordsmanship and Zen are the same. As he explains, ‘The Japanese perceive no radical discontinuity between the purpose of human activity in the *zendo*, the meditation hall of a Zen monastery, and the *dojo*, or training hall of the martial arts. They are vehicles for essentially similar pursuits – the training and liberation of human spirit – and, as such, view the activity from the same perspective and emphasise similar approaches to training’⁶⁷. Such can be seen in the samurai Munenori’s *Heihō-kadensho* (*Book on family-transmitted military arts*) (1632) which shows heavy Zen influences. Similarly, the Zen priest Takuan Sōhō’s *Taia-ki* (*Sword of Taia*) contains advice for swordsmen to keep a clear mind. Kiyota has pointed out how both Zen and Kendo represent a rejection of the possibility of enlightenment through a sudden realisation⁶⁸. Key to both is the realisation of discipline as the taming of the ego.

This “taming of the ego” takes shape in the writing of Musashi as the ‘resolute acceptance of death’⁶⁹. It is this, he explains, which separates the Way of the warrior from the Way of other professions—i.e. what naturalises him in his world and is serious also because it deals with the problem of surviving and thriving. In this respect he ties himself to the notion of *bushido*. But, this does not make Kendo or *bushido* another expression of Zen Buddhism. Musashi is quite expressly trying to set himself apart from Buddhism. This can also be seen in the work of the later Niwa Jūrōzaemon Tadaaki (1659-1741) who was a student of Zen Buddhism, Confucianism, the Chinese Classics and martial arts, who produced two books influential for modern Kendo—*Tengu geijutsu-ron* (1727) and *Neko-no-myōjutsu* (1729).⁷⁰ In the latter, which tells the story of cats trying to catch a rat, the oldest character explains the natural way of the universe and how to utilise the vital force *ki*. Warriors who can control their minds will be able to utilise their *ki* to defeat any opponent. This, and other later texts, also show an increasing influence of Daoism on the *kenjutsu ryūha*. Importantly, as more of these works proliferated there was less emphasis on manuals for proper technique and more emphasis on instruction in how the samurai were to live their lives⁷¹.

As to the religion/nationalism categories, the development of *bushido* through these samurai not only situated itself within the Tokugawa government, it also situated it against it based on the role of “resolute acceptance of death” as the central theme. As peace continued, there arose a perceived “sportification” of *kenjutsu ryūha* through the introduction of protective equipment and wooden weaponry to promote non-fatal combat.⁷² These changes sparked intense debates among samurai as to the deterioration of *kenjutsu*—i.e the loss of its seriousness. At the same time, inspired by Confucian principles, various edicts were issued by the Tokugawa in attempts to control the samurai that would also constitute attacks on *bushido*. The most damaging came in 1663 when the practice of *junshi*, a form of *seppuku* (ritual self-disembowelment)

performed by samurai upon the death of their lord, was outlawed.⁷³ As a result of this ban, a number of samurai found themselves forced to retire rather than commit *junshi* and by consequence were ostracised from a society unused to dealing with people in their position. This would lead Yamamoto Tsunenori (1659-1719) and other samurai to compose the *Hagakure* (1709-1716) in which they expounded a philosophy critical of the decadence of *bushido* under the Tokugawa. As these samurai saw it, the weakening of the resolute acceptance of death in the service of one's lord created an emphasis on self-welfare.

The *Hagakure* places resolute acceptance of death at the core of *bushido* in terms of honour through loyalty to one's lord. But, at the same time during the Tokugawa period, *bushido* also came to incorporate, alongside this ideal, the concepts of *gi* (justice) and *a-ware* (aesthetic); these being derived from Confucianism and Shinto respectively. As such, Kiyota concludes, ‘*Bushidō*’s vision of personal honour, then, is more positive than the mere desire to avoid shame. It is in fact deeply religious⁷⁴. However, to an extent, what makes it “religious” is cases like the *Hagakure* and how they criticised the Tokugawa government. That is, while the writing of Musashi was attempting to find a place for a particular social group within the emerging government through *bushido*. By the time of Yamamoto the situation had changed to the point where they were offering a non-Tokugawa alternative—a deviant form of naturalisation. Indeed, it is possible to identify in this social critique of the loss of *bushido* the nationalistic concern with the problem of surviving and thriving of Japanese society as a whole: self-interest is damaging for everyone.

In another regard this may be seen as the attempt of a diminishing social group to maintain its cultural capital. As in the case of Hideyoshi, at various points the ruling elite tried to limit peasant access to weapons as a means of securing samurai dominance. In fact, it was bans such as these that led to the development of another of Japan's most popular martial arts—Karate. The natives of the island of Okinawa were banned from carrying weapons during the early Tokugawa period and so developed karate as a fist-fighting system to defend themselves against Satsuma samurai.⁷⁵ However, the exigencies of actual peace meant that these bans had little impact. Many samurai found themselves struggling to support their *ryūha* and so opened their doors to commoners in order to fund themselves. In doing so, *bushido* was introduced to the wider populace, which would be significant during the dissolution of the samurai as a social group during the next period of Japanese history.

The samuraization of Japan

Having closed its borders for nearly two hundred years, Japan was forcibly reintroduced to the West by the arrival of Commodore Perry in

1853. The resulting Meiji Restoration in 1868 would see large scale political and social changes, arguably, along Western models that saw the total dissolution of the samurai class. Nonetheless, as this social group disappeared, *kenjutsu* was made ever more available amid rising nationalistic sentiments as Japan established itself among its Western competitors. Harumi Befu has described this as the samuraization of Japan: ‘characteristics such as loyalty, perseverance, and diligence said to be held by a small (but elite) segment of the population – the samurai – were gradually extended through propaganda, education, and regulation to cover the whole of the population’⁷⁶. We might say that rather than the group disappearing, it expanded to encompass the entire populace with the samurai sword becoming the symbol of Japanese spirit.

This “samuraization” fits with Anthony Smith’s suggestion that nations, in this modern context, ‘provide individuals with “sacred centres,” objects of spiritual and historical pilgrimage that reveal the uniqueness of their nation’s “moral geography”’⁷⁷. That is, the nation naturalises its members in relation to the fundamental problem of surviving and thriving. *Kenjutsu* and the underlying *bushido* provided just these sacred centres. These were then enshrined in the Japanese educational system when *kenjutsu* was introduced to middle and normal schools in 1911. During the process that would lead to this, a report by the Ministry of Education adjudicating on the advantages and disadvantages of introducing *kenjutsu* in schools listed one of the advantages as ‘rouses the spirit and boosts morale’.⁷⁸ These changing social conditions would also see the transformation of the various *bujutsu* into *budo*, including *kenjutsu* into *kendo*. Bennett observes that the various private organisations responsible for this succeeded in making these martial practices ‘more germane to modern societal needs, with a focus on education and competition’.⁷⁹

The *budo* were then directed toward imperialistic and militaristic ends, heightening with the onset of the Second World War. This could be seen in the continuing transmission of *bushido* through the various *budo*. Even though *seppuku* was not enforced, indeed technically illegal in certain situations, its practice was nonetheless applauded by wider society. Shrines were often erected in dedication of those who had committed this ritual suicide. It was only after several officers notably committed *seppuku* before the Imperial Palace on the eve surrender during the Second World War that the practice would begin to fade away. So significant were these *budo* for Japanese nationalistic (and imperialistic) identity, that occupation forces banned them, removing Kendo from school curricula, after the Second World War.

Budo were then revived in the 1950s as “democratic sports” which would lead to the entry of Judo into the Olympics in 1964. Significantly, much of the “spiritual” aspects of Kendo had to be sheared away in order to convince occupations forces that they were not promoting militarism

and/or ultranationalism. Again, to be spiritual in this context means to be natural in the Japanese life-world. It was only once Kendo was established as a sport that it was re-introduced to schools in 1953. The accompanying “Instructional Handbook for School Kendo” explained that ‘Kendo as a sport is not the same as kendo as a means of fighting ... The interaction represents an affirmation of each other’s existence, and a recognition of the common thread of humanity’.⁸⁰ Bennett, problematically, calls this rebranding of Kendo as a sport a “civilising process,” but I would suggest it is more accurate to describe this as a Westernising process—redeveloping Kendo into a form that would appease Western occupiers *and* their understanding of what it is to be natural. Perhaps most significant in this process is the move away from nationalism to religion. Pre-war Kendo was for emperor, for country, for moral cultivation as a loyal subject, for imparting manners and discipline, post-war Kendo is for enjoyment. All spiritual and nationalistic rhetoric was exorcised and, at the school level, the term *budo* was replaced with *kakugi* (combative sport) in 1957.

Of course, this was not met without resistance and Kendo associations responsible for disseminating Kendo in schools would highlight its link to Japanese cultural heritage. In the 1970s, Kendo was again promoted as a cultural pursuit and means of spiritual growth, the Japan Budo Association (JBA) releasing the “Budo Charter” in 1977 which warned of the threat to the essence of *budo* by an over-emphasis on technical ability.⁸¹ Actions such as these would lead to the reinstatement of the term *budo* within education curricula in 1989.⁸² However, due to practical restrictions, Kendo is only taught in 25% of schools and other forms of *budo* are taught instead. At the same time, changing circumstances for students—where success at Kendo competitions can mean access to high-end careers—has resulted in an explosion of tournaments. In response, this has led to the emergence of several *budo*, including the Nihon Kendō Kyōkai (NKK), vehemently opposing ‘the over “sportification” and compromising of martial and cultural veracity’.⁸³ The JBA, for instance, has argued that the emphasis on competition is caught up in the process of globalisation. Though not explicitly stated, this is a concern about globalisation on a Western model, one which leads to erosion of the *budo*’s integrity. This resulted in 2008 in the JBA issuing the “Philosophy of Budo” which made the following statement:

Budō the martial ways of Japan, have their origins in the traditions of *bushidō* the way of the warrior. *Budō* is a time-honoured form of physical culture comprising of *jūdō*, *kendō*, *kyūdō*, *sumō*, *karatedō*, *aikidō*, *shōrinji kempō*, *naginata* and *jūkendō*. Practitioners study the skills while striving to unify mind, technique and body; develop his or her character; enhance their sense of morality; and to cultivate a respectful and courteous demeanour.

Practised steadfastly, these admirable traits become intrinsic to the character of the practitioner. The *Budō* arts serve as a path to self-perfection. This elevation of the human spirit will contribute to social prosperity and harmony, and ultimately, benefit the people of the world⁸⁴.

In another vein, Kiyota’s discussion of “*mushin*”—“mind of no-mind”⁸⁵—indicates where the seeming importance of Kendo lies. Here Kiyota notes how a samurai, facing an opponent, will experience fear and asks the question of where this fear comes from? Drawing on Buddhism (though no more detail is given than this), Kiyota suggests that fear is created by one’s own mind, particularly in the way it gives rise to the ego as the expression of self-preservation. When the practitioner finds themselves dogged by fear, they are exhorted to perform a *sutemi*—literally, a “body-abandoning” attack. Doing so cultivates the state of *mushin* described by the Zen master D.T. Suzuki in which an altered state of consciousness occurs that frees the mind from the ego. Kiyota goes on to explain ‘whereas the foremost concern in Western sports is to respond to an external challenge and to defeat an opponent ... the foremost challenge in *kendo* is to tame the ego by internalising challenge’.⁸⁶ This distinction between Western sport and Japanese martial art can be seen in the treatment of the *shinai* (Kendo’s primary weapon) compared to a tennis racket. As the “Mindset of Kendo Instruction” issued in 2006 by the NKK explains:

Kendo is a way where the individual cultivates one’s mind (the self) by aiming for *shin-ki-ryoku-itchi* (unification of mind, spirit and technique) utilizing the *shinai*. The “*shinai*-sword” should be not only directed at one’s opponent but also at the self. Thus, the primary aim of instruction is to encourage the unification of mind, body and *shinai* through training in this discipline.⁸⁷

The *shinai*, then, is not an implement like the tennis racket, it is a conduit for developing, or naturalising, the person.

Thus, the Western influence of globalisation which reconfigures the various *budo* as sports is seen to detract these aspects. In the case of Kendo, this expresses itself as a fear of loss of hegemony, particularly if it were to enter the Olympics. This concern is corroborated by the transformations in Judo for which there is now no Japanese representative in the International Judo Federation. Guttmann has observed that the transition of Japanese martial arts to the West often leads to ‘transformation in accordance with Western assumptions about the nature of sports’.⁸⁸ Again, this may be seen as a transition from a serious pursuit to play. Kendo, in many ways, has reacted to the “cultural

imperialism” alluded to by Guttman with a form of cultural imperialism of its own. As Kendo is progressively “evangelised” (Bennett’s phrase) around the world, there is still a strong emphasis that only the Japanese can fully understand the Way of Kendo⁸⁹. Conversely, for the Japanese outside of Japan, Kendo has been ‘a cultural artefact that connected students, expatriate businessmen, immigrants, and their families to traditional Japanese culture and values’.⁹⁰ Both trends represent a keen focus within Kendo on its connection with *being* Japanese. A part of being Japanese is to do Kendo *and* only the Japanese can do Kendo properly. That is, as a mode of naturalisation, Kendo only works if you are Japanese.

Conclusion

At the start of the paper I took that stance that starting understanding “religion” substantively is the wrong one. Rather, I proposed that we are better off understanding it ideologically. In this respect I proposed it is better to begin with naturalisation: the modes by which a person “fits” in their life-world so that they may survive and thrive. “Nationalism” and “religion” are then means by which people categorise modes of naturalisation. I suggested further that martial arts can be seen as modes of naturalisation through their discussion of “martial arts vs martial sports”. In particular, the critics of sportification appeal to the “spiritual” aspects of these disciplines. In turn, this appeal to a “spiritual” side is an indication of seriousness (in the Sartrean sense).

In the case of Kendo this naturalisation began as a process for a specific social group—the samurai. From its earliest formations in various *kenjutsu ryūha* it was enmeshed with what are conventionally called “religions”—i.e. Buddhism, Confucianism and Daoism—progressing to a point where it would even become a competitive mode of naturalisation. Taking shape as *bushido* this received articulation through samurai such as Musashi Miyamoto who concerned themselves with “fitting” the samurai within the developing Tokugawa system after the Sengoku period. By the point of Yamamoto Tsunenori, however, it also became a means of protest against that very government and the modes of naturalisation which it promoted. However, with the dissolution of the samurai due to the Meiji Restoration this mode of naturalisation was disseminated through the entire populace. By consequence, Kendo as the expression of *bushido*, has primarily been nationalistic since its conception. It has been about “fitting” Japanese (and only Japanese) people in their life-world.

By way of conclusion I want to review my original stipulation of “religion” as a mode of naturalisation as a general analytic concept. Regardless of whatever else may be attributed to it, the distinguishing factor in my understanding is that “religions” are chosen. That is, to go back to the original point, the Chinese were able to choose from Confucian, Buddhist, and Daoist modes of naturalisation. The samurai and

Kendo, however, present a problem for this emphasis on “choice”. Specifically, it struggles to find analytic traction in a class-based society. As noted, the development of *bushido* was about naturalising a particular contradistinct group within their life-world. As naturalisation it fits neither “nationalism” because it “belonged” to a particular subgroup, nor “religion” because this group had only this one means of naturalisation. If each class has its own distinctive mode of naturalisation and movement between classes is restricted, nominally at least, then the element of “choice” is removed. As such, to speak of “religion” here makes little sense—at least as I’ve deployed the term.

At issue is that the very term “choice” may well be perpetuating certain Western notions about “religion”, namely that religion is something chosen makes it a *private* matter. But if there is anything to be emphasised about my understanding of “spirituality” as it is used by martial artists, it is that as something *serious* it is very much so *public*. And as we saw in the case of China, Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism as *sanjiao*—as State sanctioned—were *public* choices. Similarly, in Japan, the conversion of Takeda Harunobu (1521-1573) to Buddhism (subsequently taking the name Takeda Shingen) in 1551 was as much about stabilising his lands as any particular personal need for salvation or experience with the nameless (following Gentz’s understanding). That is, promoting Buddhism as the sanctioned mode of naturalisation ensured the surviving and thriving of the Takeda clan. The issue here is that the very use of the term “religion” is bound up with a Christian-created division between “Church” and “State”. Yet because it is Christian-created (-dominated), it only makes sense in Christian contexts.

Considering the history of this division emerging out of the Reformation and the demise of Catholicism as the dominant mode of naturalisation throughout Europe, we may relate this back to Goldenberg’s understanding of religions as vestigial states. Admittedly, there is a problem with Goldenberg’s terminology—embedded in naturalistic approaches—in which the term “vestigial” is reminiscent of E.B. Tylor’s “survivals”. This creates a sense in which religions are being called “deviant”, implicating a value judgement on those groups for not meeting a standard which (Goldenberg presumes) they have not met.⁹¹ But there is nothing theoretically wrong⁹² with the use of “deviancy” so long as it is understood as self-referentially. That is, “religion” indicates a deviant mode of naturalisation which is in contradistinction to State sanctioned forms of naturalisation.

Using this refined understanding it would be more accurate to say that Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism in pre-modern China would not be “religions” because as *sanjiao* they are not deviant. But, in this context it would make sense to call Christianity a “religion” because although Christian missionaries in China would not have self-referentially thought of themselves as deviant, they would have at least known that introducing

Christianity to China involved challenging certain established institutions (i.e. modes of naturalisation). Similarly, although *bushido* as it was propagated by Musashi does not fit the “religion” scheme, *bushido* as it was propagated by the likes of Yamamoto does: he, and his fellow samurai, saw themselves as critics of the Tokugawa modes of naturalisation. Of course, it must be stipulated that the tenancy of this term—and the implied deviance—is brief and applicable only to the period of the composition of the *Hagakure*—i.e. circa. 1709-1716. After the Meiji Restoration, by becoming dominant modes of naturalisation, Kendo (and *bushido*) are fully “nationalistic”. Only in the context of America, where Kendo is an aspect of maintaining a distinctive Japanese identity does the term “religion” become more viable insofar as there is contradistinction with dominant American modes of naturalisation. This, however, is only a starting point, John Donohue’s work on the transposition of martial arts to America indicates a far more complicated relationship of “nationalism” and “religion” (as I am proposing they should be understood) in this milieu⁹³. Further, the Japaneseness of Kendo may be a distinctive feature of this one martial art and others, Taekwondo as one notable, are not so racially bound.

Notes

¹ Elements of this paper appear in abridged form in Jonathan Tuckett, (Forthcoming) “Spirituality and Martial Arts: “Fitting” in the life-world”, in *Christianity and Sport* (working title), ed. by A. Adogame.

² Michael Maliszewski, *Spiritual Dimensions of the Martial Arts* (Rutland: Charles E Tuttle Co., 1996), 20.

³ Markus Davidsen, “What is Wrong with Pagan Studies?,” *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 24 (2012): 183-199.

⁴ Nor am I immune from this problem – I myself am a practitioner of Taekwondo. Worse still, I have recently become an instructor, placing myself in a position of authority that can (to a limited degree) shape the very tradition I am a part of. Much of what I have to say about Taekwondo must be treated as anecdotal rather than empirical. I have not yet been in the position to pursue formal, ethnographic research. The present considerations are primarily historical.

⁵ Alexander Bennett, *Kendo: Culture of the Sword* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2015), 22.

⁶ Maliszewski, 21.

⁷ Maliszewski’s book happens to be dedicated to Eliade who helped in the composition (1996, 5).

⁸ See Timothy Fitzgerald, “A Critique of ‘Religion’ as a Cross-cultural Category,” *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 9 (2) (1997): 91-110.

⁹ Following Edmund Husserl, *Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy*. Edited and translated by Q. Lauer. London: Harper Torchbooks, 1965, 155, I mean “Europe” in the broad sense of including America and most English-language influenced countries.

¹⁰ Ann Taves, *Religious Experience Reconsidered* (Oxford: Princeton University Press,

2009).

¹¹ Naomi Goldberg, “Theorising Religions as Vestigial States in Relation to Gender and Law: Three Cases,” *Journal of Feminist Studies of Religion* 29(1) (2013): 39–52.

¹² Joachim Gentz, *Understanding Chinese Religions* (Edinburgh: Dunedin, 2013), 1.

¹³ Robert LaFleur, *Asian in Focus: China* (ABC-CLIO, 2010), 163.

¹⁴ Tim H. Barrett and Francesca Tarocco, “Terminology and Religious Identity: Buddhism and the Genealogy of the Term *Zongjiao*,” in *Dynamics in the History of Religions between Asia and Europe. Encounters, Notions, and Comparative Perspectives*, ed. Volkhard Krech and Marion Steinicke (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 307–319

¹⁵ Gentz, 3.

¹⁶ Gentz, 5.

¹⁷ Alfred Schutz, *Collected Papers I: The Problem of Social Reality*, ed. M. Natanson (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1962).

¹⁸ Schutz, *Collected Papers*, 76.

¹⁹ More detailed discussions of people as “problem solving” and the different provinces of meaning can be found in Jonathan Tuckett, “Alfred Schutz’s Postulates of Social Science: Clarifications and Amendments,” *Human Studies* 37(4) (2014): 469–488 and Jonathan Tuckett, “Extending the Dimensions of the Social World through Game-Worlds,” *Gamevironments* 2 (2015): 61–99.

²⁰ See Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (London: Penguin Books, 1966), 36. It should be noted that the resolution of this problem isn’t necessarily about living as long as possible. As we will come across in the case of Samurai, in many respects it is about determining the proper way to die.

²¹ This understanding, which is consistent with Husserl’s and Schutz’s understanding of the “natural attitude,” can cause confusion in relation to the way “natural” is used by naturalism (the prevailing methodology of Religious Studies). In the past I have preferred to employ the archeologism “*cyndelic*” to curtail confusion. This Old English word can be translated as “natural,” “proper,” “suitable,” “lawful,” or “rightful.” Thus, to be “natural” in the sense of *cyndelic* is to effectively find one’s “place” within the life-world. The naturalistic understanding of “natural” as a mathematical manifold is better approximated by the Old English “*gebyrde*” which means “natural,” “innate,” or “inborn.” However, considering the extensive Korean and Japanese terminology below I have found it smoother to retain the English word.

²² Maxine Sheets-Johnstone, “Strangers, Trust, and Religion: On the Vulnerability of Being Alive,” *Human Studies* 39(2) (2016), 174.

²³ Sheets-Johnstone, 175.

²⁴ Gentz, 12.

²⁵ Gentz, 9.

²⁶ Gentz, 6.

²⁷ Gentz, 5–6.

²⁸ Alfred Schutz, *The Phenomenology of the Social World*, trans. G. Walsh and F. Lehnert (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1967), 75.

²⁹ John Donohue, “Wave People: The Martial Arts and the American Imagination,” in *Combat, Ritual and Performance: Anthropology of the Martial Arts*, ed. D. Jones (London: Praeger, 2002), 65–80.

³⁰ Gldenberg, 40.

³¹ Minory Kiyota, *Kendo: Its philosophy, history and means to personal growth* (London:

Kegan Paul International, 1995), 129.

³² Bennett, 1.

³³ John Clements, “A Short Introduction to Historical European Martial Arts,” *Meibukan Magazine: House of the Pure Martial Arts* 1 (2006), 2.

³⁴ Bennett, 200.

³⁵ Kiyota, 131; Maliszewski, 64-65.

³⁶ Kiyota, 15.

³⁷ Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, trans. H. Barnes (London: Routledge, 2003), 601.

³⁸ Bennett, 195.

³⁹ Kiyota, IX.

⁴⁰ Bennett, 21.

⁴¹ Bennett, 20.

⁴² Motoki Yasuo, *Bushi no Seiritsu (The Concept of Bushi)* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1994), 1.

⁴³ Kiyota, 78.

⁴⁴ Bennett, 32.

⁴⁵ See Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. R. Nice (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984) and Pierre Bourdieu, “Sport and Social Class”, in *On Sport: Critical Concepts in Sociology* Vol. 3, ed. E. Dunning and D. Malcolm (London: Routledge, 2003), 286-303.

⁴⁶ Harris, 4.

⁴⁷ Kiyota, 14.

⁴⁸ It should be borne in mind that Kiyota is another example of the blurred line between scholar and practitioner.

⁴⁹ Bennett, 45.

⁵⁰ John Donohue, “Herding the Ox, Wielding the Sword”, in *Combat, Ritual and Performance: Anthropology of the Martial Arts*, ed. D. Jones (London: Praeger, 2002), 224.

⁵¹ Karl Friday, *Legacies of the Sword: The Kashima-Shinryu and Samurai Martial Culture* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1997), 59.

⁵² Bennett, 46 emphasis added.

⁵³ Ibidem.

⁵⁴ Harris, 3.

⁵⁵ Harris, 10 and Kiyota, 48 give different ages.

⁵⁶ Ibidem.

⁵⁷ Ibidem.

⁵⁸ Eiko Ikegami, *The Taming of the Samurai: Honorific Individualism and the Making of Modern Japan* (London: Harvard University Press, 1995), 31

⁵⁹ Kiyota, 50.

⁶⁰ Sallie B. King, “Buddha Nature thought and mysticism Buddha Nature treatise, Supreme basis sutra, No increase, nodecrease sutra,” *Buddha Nature*, 1 (1990), 139.

⁶¹ Miyamoto Musashi, *A Book of Five Rings*, trans. V. Harris (London: Allison and Busby Limited, 1974), 34.

⁶² Bennett, 38-40.

⁶³ Kiyota, IX-X.

⁶⁴ Musashi, 43.

⁶⁵ Musashi, 35.

⁶⁶ Musashi, 47, emphasis added.

⁶⁷ Donohue, “Herding the Ox”, 224.

⁶⁸ Kiyota, 4.

⁶⁹ Musashi, 38.

⁷⁰ Both written under the pen name Issai Chozan. See Bennett, 66.

⁷¹ Bennett, 68.

⁷² Bennett, 73–85.

⁷³ Samurai committing suicide for their failures and treachery was a common practice during the Sengoku period. Tokugawa Ieyasu’s own son was forced to commit *seppuku* (suicide) for failing his then lord Oda Nobunaga which partly inspired his reasons for abolishing the practice.

⁷⁴ Kiyota, 86.

⁷⁵ Kiyota, 137.

⁷⁶ Harumi Befu, *Japan: An Anthropological Introduction* (Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Co, 1981), 52.

⁷⁷ Anthony Smith, *National Identity* (London: Penguin, 1991), 16.

⁷⁸ Bennett, 112.

⁷⁹ Bennett, 3.

⁸⁰ Quoted in Bennett, 176.

⁸¹ See JBA, “The Budo Charter” available from Nippon Budokan Official Website (2004) <http://www.nipponbudokan.or.jp/shinkoujigyoku/budochater.html> (accessed 15/12/15). This was released in 1997 and then redrafted in 2004.

⁸² Bennett, 180–182.

⁸³ Bennett, 4.

⁸⁴ JBA, “The Philosophy of Budo” available from Nippon Budokan Official Website (2009) http://www.nipponbudokan.or.jp/shinkoujigyoku/rinen_eng.html (Accessed 15/12/15).

⁸⁵ Kiyota, 2.

⁸⁶ Kiyota, 3.

⁸⁷ NKK, “Concept of Kendo” available from All Japan Kendo Federation (2007), <http://www.kendo-fik.org/english-page/english-page2/concept-of-Kendo.htm> (Accessed 15/12/15). Though he is not credited on the website, this translation was in fact done by Bennett (2015, 190).

⁸⁸ Allen Guttmann, “The Diffusion of Sports and the Problem of Cultural Imperialism”, in *The Sports Process: A Comparative and Developmental Approach*, ed. E. Dunning et al. (Champaign: Human Kinetic Publishers, 1993), 125.

⁸⁹ Bennett, 201.

⁹⁰ Joseph R. Svinth and Thomas Green (eds.), *Martial Arts in the Modern World* (Westport: Praeger, 2003), 149.

⁹¹ This is a criticism I have levelled against naturalists elsewhere (see Author 2015b, forthcoming a).

⁹² At least according to phenomenological strictures.

⁹³ Donohue, “Wave People”, 5.

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