

An Explanation of the Paljungdo System



Introduction

The initial intention of the Paljungdo System was to benefit ones' mental, physical and spiritual health. Other poomsae have a long standing history in Taekwondo *i.e.* Taeguk, Palgwaye, and in other Martial Arts such as Kata in Karate. Though each serve a purpose in their own right, these differ greatly from the Paljungdo System, an all encompassing system, rather than a perfunctionary set of moves, performed to progress in level or grade.

The Paljungdo system embodies the purpose and ethos of the Mudo, which is translated to spirit way, Mu- (spirit) -Do or *-thdo* (the way). Mudo returns the Martial Art back to its roots, accessible to all, viewing the individual as a whole and therefore to be cared for as such. Traditional Martial Art cannot be simplified to a sequence of movements.

History

Martial Arts in Korea originate from a need to 'protect nation and country'. However, training in the Martial Art was not limited to soldiers, but wide spread among villages and was considered basic physical education. Though it remains in conjecture, in 600AD Silla warriors learned Taekyon, whilst studying Confucian philosophy, ethics and Buddhist morality. They were guided by Won Kwang's moral code and became known as the Hwang. Also known as Sae O-Gye, the code included, loyalty, filial duty, faithfulness/trust, courage and justice, which brought a spiritual element to the Korean Martial Art.

Over time and through the influence of the western society, Martial Arts became viewed very differently from its original form. However the creation of the Paljungdo System by Master Kim Yong Ho, with guidance from Master Kim Sang Tae, returned traditional values to Taekwondo. Paljungdo was first taught in 2002 to students in England, where it sought to re-establish the heart and soul of the Spirit of the Martial Art. Meditation is a key element to this, which can be seen through the Buddhist and the Mudo Way as seeking a balance of both physical and mental health.

This table shows the strands of the Paljungdo alongside the tenants of the Mudo and the Dharma wheel.

PalJungDo	PalJungDo Meanings	Buddhist Eight-Fold Path	Tenants of the Martial Art
(1) Jung Shim	Correct Beginning	Right View	Patriotism
(2) Jung Eui	Correct Path	Right Words	Respect your parents
(3) Jung Shin	Correct Trust	Right Effort	Morality
(4) Jung Nyum	Correct Thought	Right Living	Justice
(5) Jung In	Correct Loyalty	Right Resolution	Humility
(6) Jung Hyo	Correct Filial Piety	Right Action	Correct your mistakes
(7) Jung Haeng	Correct Action	Right Concentration	Follow your Master
(8) Jung Do	Correct Way	Right Thinking	The Way

Jumbi

Breathing is an essential part of life, “if you stop breathing you die,” (Master Kim Yong Ho) The Jumbi is the preparation to undertake each Paljungdo. As you progress through the system, the complexity of the breathing increases, with the purpose of focusing one’s mind and preparing physically to undertake the Paljungdo.

Each Paljungdo has a particular focus and begins with a unique jumbi. A move of either the left or right foot first, indicates if the Paljungdo is linked to internal or external energy. Martial Art is about the use of energy, both internal and external. The Jumbi of each Paljungdo has prescribed hand positions, which link to different internal organs.

PalJungDo	Internal Organ	Left foot (external energy) or Right foot (internal energy)
(1) Jung Shim	Lungs	Left
(2) Jung Eui	Large Intestine	Right
(3) Jung Shin	Stomach	Right
(4) Jung Nyum	Spleen	Left
(5) Jung In	Gallbladder	Right
(6) Jung Hyo	Liver	Left
(7) Jung Haeng	Heart	Left
(8) Jung Do	Small Intestines	Right

In modern Martial Art the jumbi is often misunderstood, underutilised or ignored altogether. In the Paljungdo system the jumbi is rather an integral part. The jumbi is time to prepare your body, focus your mind and massaging your body with energy as you breathe. Prior to beginning your jumbi it is important the Paljungdo name is shouted aloud. This is not only as a release of energy, but to show intention and focus so the mind stays steady during practice. The midway point of each Paljungdo is marked by a kiap, a release of both energy and breath before undertaking the second half of a Paljungdo.

Movements

Although learning the Paljungdo is part of a student's grade and the techniques are progressive, demonstrating a development in technique and physical capability, the system is designed to test more than memory or proficiency in technique.

Although those following the Mudo system use the Paljungdo forms for progression through gradings like traditional Taekwondo, the Paljungdo system is more than stand alone. It is designed to build mental and physical knowledge of each and every student. Once a student reaches Jung Do, they should have the physical and mental

tools which enable them to progress to 1st Dan. From this point the individual can see the entirety of the Paljungdo System.

Each Paljungdo has a meaning, one which we must strive to focus and meditate on throughout practice. Through initial teaching a student may reflect on the meaning in relation to their Martial Art journey, perhaps in such instances see how it reflects on their own lives. When on the floor, it is often said “you cannot hide”. Physically the Instructor sees all, every success, every bad habit; some may feel their fellow students see this also, however this also applies mentally.

Cogs turning, thoughts flying, brain whirling and swirling as we are so often expected to work in this way in a modern western society – go, go, go! These thought processes can be seen by an Instructor on the floor and subsequently we are all taught to bow and leave the outside world outside, before we enter the dojang. The system demands full physical and mental focus. Students may experience moments where they find their Paljungdo causes them to reflect on certain aspects of their lives. Personally I’ve felt moments of this when, as a kup grade, I was taught yeop chagi and had to learn to trust in myself and my Instructor. However for myself, the most significant moment was when, first learning Jung Nyum (4), meaning correct thought. For many it is easy to just learn names, meanings and movements and never consider the importance. Jung Nyum made me stop and take note of my own thought patterns and choices, as someone who has suffered with anxiety and depression for a number of years, it made me alter my mentality. Jung Nyum brought about a sense of clarity and was a clear indicator of my mind being focused or distant from the task at hand. It was an opportunity for me to prove to myself I could overcome my anxiety and find peace in a chaotic mind. It was here I realised the Paljungdo System not only highlights physical capabilities, but mental capabilities too. It is also through this process we are taught and experience the tenants of the Martial Art, which are embedded within the PalJungDo System.

A System for Health

From 9th Kup to 1st Kup, knowledge is built upon and an understanding of the Martial Art and the Paljungdo System is developed. It is important to understand though each Paljungdo has its own meaning and purpose; the intention is these are merely building blocks to form the complete System. Paljungdo in its complete form is

intended to be practised start to end, thereby encompassing a variety of physical techniques to benefit the body, breathing and controlling energy while focusing the mind on the 8 meanings benefiting the mind and spirit. This all encompassing practice makes the Paljungdo system unique. Life cannot be segregated into neat little boxes, as most often attempted in the fast pace of a Western society, things are continually moving and changing, overlapping. You cannot consider one thing without the subsequent impact on another. This is the way of life; everything intertwines and forms the whole. We as humans cannot be separated and divided into boxes, physical, mental and spiritual health all form the whole, but are so often forgotten, ignored, or have too much emphasis placed on one over another. As the Taegukki demonstrates, the world is nothing without balance; ying and yang, left and right, internal and external and positive and negative.



The Paljungdo system was created to represent this equilibrium to seek a healthy life.

Levels of Practise

The system as a whole can be practised at a variety of levels. The first is as we are taught, breathing with each move. Breathing is the constant throughout the system, for without breath there is no life, the importance of which I have already touched upon with the jumbi for each Paljungdo. This level of breathing progresses to packages of breathing. Until you are confident in the moves themselves, packaged breathing and focusing on the moving of your energy is impossible, for your mind is still centred on retaining the movements.

Packaged breathing builds stamina to progress to the third stage, performing each Paljungdo on 1 or 2 breaths. As you progress, the focus is on moving your energy, not just through your own body but to deliver it to the “attacker” to cause damage.

This links to the Eastern philosophy of energy transfer, but also the western understanding “energy cannot be created or destroyed, but transferred or converted,”. Again highlighting a difference in the Paljungdo system, as this is a test of the mind, rather than musculation. The Mudo way is far more diverse and less centralised on physical ability, build, age or gender, unlike other codes where the youngest and fittest = the most successful and capable.

Energy and Health

Without breathing we die, when we can't control our energy we become sick, often the root of many western illnesses – lack of balance in work life resulting in stress based illnesses, or nutritional imbalances resulting in energy crashes. The Paljungdo system is designed to promote health in every sense and is adaptable in the level at which it is performed, but also can be used to re-address an imbalance.

Continuous breathing, whereby a Paljungdo is performed at a slower level and continuously to the end of every move, allows the individual to still benefit from the system, while still working on balancing energy levels. Focus can still be maintained on stances, transitions and technique while working around a physical an injury, such as a trapped nerve for example.

Furthermore, through meditating on the particular meaning of the Paljungdo as it is performed, or through selecting a Paljungdo for the jumbi, thus targeting an internal organ, health can be improved. Alternatively, you may focus on the left sided Paljungdo, which move old energy out of the body. Choosing 2,3,5 and 8, which focus on internalising energy for health . However once balance is restored the Paljungdo system should be performed in its entirety, daily, to maintain and promote good physical, mental and spiritual health.

Understanding the system

There are many different levels of understanding; learning is concept which has been garnered much attention throughout history and across different cultures. The dobok is white to represent cleanliness, but is also a reflection of your mind, symbolising a blank slate and willingness to learn. It is often said, no matter our grade, we should all approach each lesson with an empty cup, allowing ourselves to listen and gather as much knowledge as we can.

When first learning and beginning to understand the Paljungdo system, it is at a simplistic level; movements, names and a meaning. Though a student's knowledge is built upon as they progress towards 1st Dan, each new Paljungdo will begin the same; with a name, a meaning and physical movements; until all eight have been learnt. From this point the student can deepen their understanding of the system as a whole, wherein they learn more about moving energy, reflecting on the meaning while performing each Paljungdo. However what you learn in the dojang, a place where you train your mind and your body, is knowledge you can take with you when you leave. Once you can do something, the next step is applying and using this training to benefit your life and the lives of those around you. This is the third level of understanding.

The Paljungdo system can be practised anywhere, but more importantly it is the meanings behind the individual Paljungdo which can be applied to life outside the dojang.

PalJungDo	Meaning
(1) Jung Shim	Correct Beginning
(2) Jung	Correct Path
(3) Jung Shin	Correct Trust
(4) Jung Nyum	Correct Thought
(5) Jung In	Correct Loyalty
(6) Jung	Correct Filial Piety
(7) Jung	Correct Action
(8) Jung Do	Correct Way

Everyone must begin somewhere, a new challenge arises, a new chapter in our lives, **everything begins** and starts somewhere. It is from here you choose to **continue correctly**, use what you have learnt to keep going. Beginning to **trust** in yourself follows, while maintaining **correct thoughts**, a positive mind set and a

resilience to negativity and self doubt. Being **loyal** to yourself and those you trust to help and support you and accepting your family, most importantly **your parents** for who they are and all they're taught you, be this through positive or negative experiences. Moving forward requires you to **move**, make a choice, a decision, move forward and no matter the past follow and believe in yourself and **the way** – *thdo*.

Conclusion

The Paljungdo System is an integral part of the Mudo and far more than a sequence of movements. By following the Mudo and this system students will learn the true meaning of the Martial Art, re-establishing the heart and soul of the Spirit of the Martial Art, learning to train their mind, body and spirit and following –*thdo*, the way.

By Emma Louise Dunn