I analyzed the fundamental differences between the Eastern martial arts and Western sports, comparing their essences in this paper. It is no doubt that irreconcilable differences exist between the martial arts and sports because of their inherent philosophical stances. That is, there are some differences between martial arts and sports in some aspects such as objects, practice, goals, and history. However, many think the martial arts is synonymous with sports because the forms have been misrepresented in the West. This has led to a misunderstanding of the martial arts. The purpose of the martial arts is entirely different from that of sports. Any similarity is superficial and relates only their engagement in physical activity. It is helpful to understand the meaning of physical activities of the East and the West by examining martial arts and sports.

**Key Words:** martial arts, sports, the East, the West, physical activity, similarity
Introduction

There were and are surely some different concepts of physical movement between the East and the West. It means that the interpretation on the physical activity could be different between the East and the West.

In spite of their similarity in appearance, the martial arts and sports have some fundamental differences. Inner attitudes and self-knowledge are emphasized in martial arts tradition. In contrast, Western sports usually values competition and winning.

It is noted that Western sports was born in ancient Greece to give honor and glory to the gods, and it was mainly used for recognition in society, and for defense of the community. On the other hand, in the East, the martial arts have been used for self-perfection and self-determination. The individual conquers himself and his evil desires rather than other people and community.

Physical activity in the martial arts can be explained under the concept of Tao which includes everything in the universe, whereas play and games in sports are conducted under the order and rule.

Many think the martial arts is synonymous with sports because the forms have been mis-presented in the West. This has led to a misunderstanding of the martial arts. The purpose of the martial arts is entirely different from that of sports. Any similarity is superficial and relates only their engagement in physical activity.

It is assumed that the cultures of East and West are incommensurate; hence an understanding of the Eastern martial arts through Western philosophy is impossible in principle. Thus, the road to true knowledge of Eastern martial arts may not be approached by reason and logic, but only by intuition and insight (Shim, 1980).

I would like to explore some differences between martial arts and sports through analyzing the characters of them. For this, I will attempt to differentiate and distinguish the underlying foundation and philosophy of martial arts and sports. By this examining, we can find some philosophical differences between martial arts and sports.

The Martial Arts and Sports: A Comparative Analysis

The martial arts and sports are heuristic structures governed by principles and fundamental movement characteristics regulated in time and space. Principles governing them never depart from these fundamental characteristics. However,