Kata – The true essence of Budo martial arts
Simon Alexander Dodd, David Brown

Abstract

This paper uses documentary research techniques to analyse the use of kata, forms, in the Japanese martial arts. Following an introduction on the existence of kata practice, using existing sources of information the paper first examines the spiritual developments of bushido, secondly, the social changes that led to the redevelopment of bujutsu into budo is scrutinised. Next, the position of kata in relation to budo martial arts is explored followed by a discussion on the use of kata as a pedagogy. Finally, kata is repositioned in light of the contextual expansion investigated demonstrating how kata could represent the intended essence of budo as well a culturally-valued, spiritual pedagogy.

Keywords

kata; budo; martial arts; bushido; spirituality; pedagogy

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References


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of kata, or ‘forms’, has come to define and symbolise much of their practice internationally; “kata is a pattern structure of the Japanese society and culture in general” (Rafolt, 2014, p. 199). While the In essence…practicing an action a certain way, time after time, so that in the end we come into contact with our true nature.” Despite Sokyu’s wonderful insight, I still want to go deeper down the rabbit hole and take a look at the work of Hisamitsu Shinichi, who more clearly defines the characteristics of the Zen aesthetic. The easy way is also the right way, and martial arts is not special; the closer to the true way of martial arts, the less wastage of expression there is.” Mifune Kyuzo. There is internal work going on in the bio-mechanics of budo that is not obvious. Kata in the highest expression that I have practiced it is a quiet dance. It is the act of finding stillness in motion and motion in stillness. The chatter of the regular mind falls away and there is simply the task at hand.