

The Way of Kata in Kodokan Judo

[The original paper](#) contains 23 sections, with 10 passages identified by our machine learning algorithms as central to this paper.

Paper Summary

SUMMARY PASSAGE 1

Kata Practice In Current Times

In the article "Competition, Kata and the Art of Judo" (Jones, 2005) it was explained how the practice of the kata in judo had become deemphasized. In his article Jones outlined how the IJF's and national governing bodies' (NGB) emphasis on the sports-competitive aspects of judo and winning medals had produced generations of fighters and coaches who believed that kata practice was outdated and had no relevance or value.

SUMMARY PASSAGE 2

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This is very much the case with the word kata. Although the accepted translation of kata in judo is "form," other words, such as "template," "pattern," or "style," might be better suited. The word kata is also often used in Japanese culture to describe standard of posture.

SUMMARY PASSAGE 3

The Purpose Of Kata Practice In Judo

It became impossible to teach students individually as had been the case in the early days, and a system to teach many students simultaneously was required" (Kano, 1927). It is a wrong, but widely held, belief that the objective of kata practice in judo is the development of technical refinement and the perfection of technique. This is only a minor component of kata practice, since technique can be perfected in other ways.

SUMMARY PASSAGE 4

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The Koshiki-no-kata was placed in the Kodokan repertoire as a reminder of judo's heritage being partially in Kito-ryu jujutsu, in particular its Takenakaha style (Ibid). Accordingly, the Koshiki-no-kata is also known as the Kito Kata and can be thought of as the kata of "judo tradition" or "judo history."

SUMMARY PASSAGE 5

Inner Feeling

It has already been explained how kata in judo involves the synthesis of a whole group of physical and mental concepts and disciplines in the performance of extremely challenging routines and exercises, and how this makes the kata study a complete education in itself. "The concept of kata is often misunderstood. Although various techniques are executed, kata should not be considered a catalog of designated responses to specific dangerous situations.

SUMMARY PASSAGE 6

Harmony, Concentration, Immersion, And Purity

In a personal communication with the authors, the noted judo practitioner Paul Nogaki (sixth-degree rank) recalled the teachings that he received from Daigo in 1980 regarding the thought process that one should strive to achieve when practicing kata. He stated that "kata in judo is about learning mental and physical discipline, and connecting the two together in attempting extremely difficult routines and exercises. Even the words to describe the ultimate goals to be attained in kata-in'yo-wago, senshin, seiboku, and genshitsu-are really almost impossible to translate correctly into another language [other than Japanese]" (Nogaki, 2009).

SUMMARY PASSAGE 7

Kata Championships: The Positive

It is clear that the introduction of a competitive element has provided the competitive judo player with a source of motivation for studying katas, i.e., the tangible goal of a medal. It should also be stated that some of the kata performances achieved in kata competition are outstanding in all respects, particularly those by judo practitioners from Italy, Japan, and Spain. Such spirited performances though are often the exception to the rule.

SUMMARY PASSAGE 8

Kata Championships: The Negative

Kata championships do not accommodate individuality, have no room for interpretation, and rigidly limit any creative endeavor in the performance of any particular kata. They consider only how well the "kata performance" 14 has complied with a given marking scheme, regardless of the impact that this has on the development of the performers as judo practitioners. The impact of this is that in order to achieve success at kata competition, kata practitioners are compelled to train not for enhanced insight or personal growth or to improve their own kata practice, but rather to present "carbon copy" duplicates of the physical movements of the kata as shown in the relevant teaching film.

SUMMARY PASSAGE 9

Questioning The Purpose Of Kata Practice

When katas are first studied, it is easy to become overinvolved with their ceremony, ritual, and mechanics. Notwithstanding the genuine importance of those aspects, they should not be allowed to detract from the greater lessons of the kata, and to understand those lessons it is necessary for judo practitioners to question and ask "what is a kata?" more deeply and with greater understanding and appreciation.

SUMMARY PASSAGE 10

Conclusions

Moreover, as discussed in this article, the introduction of kata competitions has only reinforced the emphasis on the mechanics of kata to the virtual exclusion of all their other aspects. Accordingly, a paradoxical situation now exists whereby kata practice is becoming more popular with rank-and-file judo practitioners, but the true purpose and spirit of kata usage is becoming increasingly lost.