

Kata – The true essence of *Budo* martial arts?

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Recepción: 22/04/2016; Aceptación: 19/06/2016; Publicación: 25/06/2016.

ORIGINAL PAPER

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.

Kata - ¿La verdadera esencia de las artes marciales *Budo*?

Resumen

Este trabajo utiliza técnicas de investigación documental para analizar el uso de las *kata*, o *formas*, en las artes marciales japonesas. Tras una introducción sobre la existencia de la práctica de las *katas*, utilizando fuentes de información disponibles, se examinan, en primer lugar, los desarrollos espirituales del *bushido*. En segundo lugar, se analizan los cambios sociales que llevaron a la transformación *bujutsu* en *budo*. A continuación, se explora la posición de las *katas* en relación con las artes marciales *budo*, siguiendo con una discusión sobre el uso de las *katas* como pedagogía. Por último, se reubican las *katas* a partir del contexto investigado, demostrando cómo las *katas* podrían representar la pretendida esencia del *budo* así como una pedagogía espiritual culturalmente valiosa.

Palabras clave: *kata*; *budo*; artes marciales; *bushido*; espiritualidad; pedagogía.

Kata – A verdadeira essência das artes marciais *Budô*?

Resumo

Este trabalho utiliza a técnica de investigação documental para analisar o uso das *kata*, ou formas, nas artes marciais japonesas. Depois de uma introdução sobre a existência da prática das *katas*, utilizando fontes de informação disponíveis, examina-se, em primeiro lugar, os desenvolvimentos espirituais do *bushido*. Em segundo lugar, analisam-se as interações sociais que levaram à transformação do *bujutsu* em *budô*. No desenvolvimento, explora-se a posição das *katas* em relação às artes marciais *budô*, seguindo-se uma discussão sobre o uso das *katas* como pedagogia. Por último, analisam-se as *katas* a partir do contexto investigado, demonstrando como as *katas* poderão representar a pretendida essência do *budô*, assim como uma pedagogia espiritual culturalmente valiosa.

Palavras-chave: *kata*; *budô*; artes marciais; *bushido*; espiritualidade; pedagogia.

1. Introduction

Japanese society has been referred to as “the culture of form” (Sasaki, 2008, p. 47). Nowhere is this more evident to those outside Japan than in the Japanese martial arts where the propensity 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 concept of *kata* exists in other Far-Eastern societies and/or martial arts or movement forms, this article will focus on the social, cultural, and spiritual customs and meanings that emerge from *koryu budo* (traditional) and *gendai budo* (modern) Japanese martial practices.

Kata is found in the Japanese martial arts of *karate-do*, *kendo*, *judo*, *aikido*, and *kyudo*, amongst others. Despite this, nearly all of these martial arts will simply translate *kata* as ‘form’, which fails to convey the deeper meaning of an important cultural practice. Japanese pedagogical

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research is an instructive starting point as it has explored other cultural, spiritual and artistic forms of *kata*, such as *sado* and *noh*¹. Perhaps one of the best definitions of *kata* comes from Matsunobu (2011, p. 47-48) who offered the following:

Japanese arts have been preserved and transmitted through *kata*, literally “form” or “mold”, through which students learn structures of art, patterns of artistic and social behaviours, and moral and ethical values, all in accordance with a prescribed formulae. *Kata* is a set of bodily movements that have been developed and preserved by precedent artists. The most efficient and authentic way to master the artistry, it is believed, is to follow the model defined as *kata*.

In examining the original texts of the founders of the aforementioned martial arts, it becomes evident that their respective martial arts philosophies stressed a non-religious spiritual development as symbiotic with the physical practices. In the Japanese locus, religion and spirituality are not terms used interchangeably, nor are they co-dependent (Matsunobu, 2007) which is close to Brown’s (in press) recent work on *tai chi chuan* which refers to this as a *holistic* spirituality. Matsunobu (2007) reports how Japanese education incorporates spirituality, and advocates a “body-based” experience from which to learn. This may explain why, in most instances, the founders and past masters of the martial arts tended to place a seemingly disproportionate emphasis on *kata* training. With this sort of contextualization, the weight accorded to *kata* training implies it is essential to the purposes of the arts themselves. Bolelli (2008, p. 69) argues that *kata* “contains the fundamental principles and the core value of the art”, and it is *kata* that actually defines them as arts; a view supported by Matsunobu (2011) and Sasaki (2008).

It would be prudent to make a distinction between *kata* as a practice and pedagogy, and the *purpose* of *kata*. The *purpose* of *kata* is often discussed widely and at length. Gichin Funakoshi (1973, p. 9), the founder of Shotokan² *karate-do* and generally considered the father of modern karate, said of *kata* “the purpose of learning *kata* is not just for the sake of learning them but for the tempering and disciplining of oneself”. While many modern martial art practitioners and/or researchers highlight the holistic properties of the Japanese or Eastern movement forms (Brown and Leledaki, 2010) and painstakingly promote their virtuous qualities, both practitioner and academic alike still seem to struggle to explain why the *practice* and *pedagogy* of *kata* is considered the most appropriate method for developing technique, and also to the furthering of holistic spirituality. The lack of clarity is perhaps down to intercultural communicative failings, which Keister (2008) attributes to the Japanese arts now being learned outside their traditional social and cultural contexts, contributing to a loss of meaning in *kata* and the arts in general. Indeed, Funakoshi (1988, p. 23) foresaw these problems commenting “there is always the potential problem of a student’s misinterpreting a *kata*, thereby altering its transmission and causing distortions”, and sadly he was justified as many martial arts schools outside Japan now only practice *kata* for the sake of tradition, use highly stylised versions for competitive success³, or have ceased their practice altogether.

In analysing the cultural context in which *kata* was developed, any attempts to dissociate the spiritual objectives from the pedagogy of *kata*, and see each as a dichotomous construct, is typically met with failure. It is conceivable that *kata* represents a pedagogy inextricably linked with spiritual cultivation, and may explain why Japanese culture has an alternative word for form, ‘*katachi*’, referring to a form devoid of meaning or purpose. It can therefore be surmised that *kata* is specifically a form with a greater goal than the aesthetic performance (Matsunobu, 2011; in press). Accordingly, it could be argued that *kata* represents a culturally-valued, spiritually-laden, pedagogy of embodied practice. To address this supposition, first this paper will examine the spiritual influences on *Bushido*, the developments that led to the change from *bujutsu* to *budo*. The article

¹*Sado*, literally ‘The Way of Tea’, commonly referred to as the tea ceremony, is a Japanese cultural activity and ceremony for the preparation of tea. *Noh* is a traditional form of Japanese theatre primarily involving music and dance based performance

² Shotokan refers to the specific style or school of *karate-do* developed by Funakoshi, the name of which was derived from his pen name *Shoto* (pine waves) and *-kan* (hall).

³ Most karate competitions include *kumite* (sparring) and *kata* (forms), however *kata* is typically less represented in comparison to *kumite*. *Kata* also exists within judo competition, although this is increasingly rare with *randori* (free style) matches taking precedence.



then returns to the subject of *kata* with an overview of *kata* within the martial arts followed by a discussion on *kata* as a pedagogy, and finally, how *kata* represents a lineage to the original purposes of Japanese martial culture.

2. Method

This work draws on existing sources of information, starting with the original texts of the founders of the martial arts commonly practiced today and branching out into historical, academic, and practitioner resources on the subject. Due to the propensity of practitioner information, often only inferring the purpose of *kata*, this paper will be abductive by nature. This paper is informed by an interpretive paradigmatic view, the methodology for which utilises documentary analysis techniques including hermeneutics (Kuckartz, 2014), qualitative content analysis (Forman and Damschroder, 2008; Kuckartz, 2014), and grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Hermeneutic, from the Greek 'hermeneutike', meaning to "explain, interpret or translate" (Kuckartz, 2014, p. 18). This analysis technique allows a researcher to analyse text in the social context of its creation. Content analysis involves a systematic analysis of text rich data (Forman & Damschroder, 2008) to discern the latent meaning derived from words and text (Kuckartz, 2014). Finally, grounded theory is an approach advocating the categorising and coding of information. As an evolving process this method allows for the separation, then reintegration, of ideas and concepts to examine the multifaceted nature of the social world (Strauss and Corbin, 1998; Kuckartz, 2014). By re-reading and cross-analysing texts in this manner it is possible to build up a multilayered analysis to investigate the specific social and cultural context that led to the development, and implementation, of *kata* training as a fundamental martial, and spiritual, pedagogy.

3. Spiritual Influences on/of *Bushido*

The Kamakura period (1185-1333) saw the rise of the warrior class to political dominance (Guttmann & Thompson, 2001), and it was during this time that the term *bushido* as a codified practice emerged (Matthews, 2012). The term *bushido* is often referred to as the samurai code of chivalry, with Nitobe (1908, p. 3) offering the literal translation "Military-Knight-Ways", or "Precepts of Knighthood". These historical sources, and later research by Brown, Jennings and Molle (2009), indicate the influence of the Asian religions and spiritual practices, particularly Buddhism, Shintoism, and Confucianism, on the development of *bushido*, and its importance in the *bujutsu* (and later *budo*)⁴ martial arts. Although the term *budo* existed at this time it did not hold the same meaning as used today (Guttmann & Thompson, 2001), therefore for clarity any reference to *bushido* is in relation to *bujutsu* within the Kamakura to pre-Meiji restoration period (pre 1868), and any links to *budo* are referring to the modern form of the martial arts (Meiji restoration onwards)⁵.

In the development of *Bushido*, Nitobe (1908, p. 9) purports that Buddhism's place in *Bushido* is thus: "it furnished a sense of calm trust in Fate, a quiet submission to the inevitable, that stoic composure in sight of danger or calamity, that disdain of life and friendliness with death". Renowned Zen master Taisen Deshimaru (1982, p. 13-14) summarises the seven essential principles of *Bushido*, and attributes them to five elements of Buddhism as shown in the Table 1.

Further to this, Deshimaru (1982) asserts that in the time since *Bushido* adopted Buddhist virtues, Buddhism and *Bushido* have been reciprocally influential in the other's development. Shintoism was also fundamental to the development of *Bushido*. Once again, Nitobe (1908, p. 10)

⁴ Greater detail on the meaning of these terms will be established later, however for now it sufficient to regard *bujutsu* as the practical martial arts used by the Samurai for warfare in feudal Japan, and *budo* as the modern equivalent emerging from the Meiji Restoration period (1868-1912) to the present day.

⁵ It should be noted that there remains debate over the use of the terms *bushido* and *budo* due to historical inconsistencies (Molle, 2010). For consistency of use this paper is aligned with Guttmann and Thompson's (2001) and Shun' (2006) interpretation wherein *budo* is used in reference to the modern meaning originating at a time when the martial arts become *-do*, or 'the way of', and *bushido* as the virtues of feudal period *bujutsu* arts.

eloquently and succinctly explains the part of *Bushido* that is occupied by Shintoism: “Such loyalty to the sovereign, such reverence for ancestral memory, and such filial piety as are not taught by any other creed, were inculcated by the Shinto doctrines, imparting passivity to the otherwise arrogant character of the samurai”. On the place of Confucianism, Nitobe (1908, p. 14-15) suggests that Confucian teachings occupy the ethical centre of *Bushido* practice. A reading of the texts of the founders of the *Budo* martial arts, in particular their autobiographies or biographies, reveals each were instructed in the five Chinese classics of Confucianism from a very early age.⁶ This was true of Funakoshi (1975) and the influence of *Bushido* and its constituent religious and moral components is evident in the Shotokan *dojo kun* as shown in Table 2 (Japan Karate Association, 2016). Note each is labelled ‘1’, believed to reflect that no principle is above the other; while proof of this intention is hard to discern, it is nevertheless accepted by most practitioners of Shotokan *karate-do*, and may be further indicative of Buddhist philosophy. Funakoshi (1938) derived the *dojo kun* from his twenty precepts that further demonstrate the *Bushido* influence on the modern martial arts⁷. A further example of the *bushido* influence can be observed in *aikido* where it is believed the seven pleats of the *hakama* symbolise the seven virtues of *bushido* (Molle, 2010).

Table 1. 7 Principles of Bushido & 5 Elements of Buddhism (Deshimaru, 1978)

| 7 Principles of Bushido | 5 Elements of Buddhism |
|--|---|
| 1. <i>Gi</i> : the right decision, taken with equanimity, the right attitude, the truth. When we must die, we must die. Rectitude. | 1. Pacification of the emotions; |
| 2. <i>Yu</i> : bravery tinged with heroism. | 2. Tranquil compliance with the inevitable; |
| 3. <i>Jin</i> : universal love, benevolence toward mankind; compassion. | 3. Self-control in the face of any event; |
| 4. <i>Rei</i> : right action – a most essential quality, courtesy. | 4. A more intimate exploration of death than of life; |
| 5. <i>Makato</i> : utter sincerity; truthfulness | 5. Pure poverty. |
| 6. <i>Melyo</i> : honor and glory. | |
| 7. <i>Chugo</i> : devotion, loyalty. | |

Table 2. Shotokan *Karate-do dojo kun*

| |
|--|
| 一、人格完成に努むること 1. Jinkaku kansei ni tsutomuru koto Seek perfection of character |
| 一、誠の道を守ること 1. Makoto no michi o mamoru koto Be sincere |
| 一、努力の精神を養うこと 1. Doryoku no seishin o yashinau koto Put maximum effort into everything you do |
| 一、礼儀を重んずること 1. Reigi o omonzuru koto Respect others |
| 一、血気の勇を戒むること 1. Kekki no yuu o imashimuru koto Develop self-control |

Perhaps the most significant continuous theme leading to the present *Budo* martial arts is the emphasis on the study of death. The relationship with death is a thread that can be traced throughout historical and modern works. Writing in the 17th and 18th centuries, samurai, and later Buddhist monk, Yamamoto Tsunetomo (1979, p. 17) stated “the Way of the Samurai is found in death”. As a point of practicality on the battlefield it was felt that by accepting the inevitability of death the preoccupation with dying could be superceded with simply the need to perform, making the warrior more effective. This is a sentiment reflected in the previous statements by Nitobe (1908) and Deshimaru (1982), but may also be found in modern writings such as those of Yokota (2010, p. 189) who argues that, in making the *dojo kun* an integrated part of a karate-ka’s character, “you will know how to face death with a smile on your face. That is the essence of *Budo*”. What can be discerned from these historical and modern sources is a belief in the relationship between spirituality, *Bushido*, *Bujutsu*, and now *Budo*, that has endured for centuries. These concepts

⁶ Kenzo Awa, founder of Kyudo: Stevens, J. (2007). *Zen Bow, Zen Arrow: the Life and Teachings of Awa Kenzo, the Archery Master from Zen in the Art of Archery*. Boston, Massachusetts: Shambhala Publications. Gichin Funakoshi, founder of Shotokan *Karate-do*: Funakoshi, G. (1975). *Karate-do: My Way of Life*. Tokyo, New York, San Francisco: Kodansha International. Jigoro Kano, founder of Judo: Kano, J. (1986). *Kodokan Judo*. Tokyo: Kodansha International. Morehei Ueshiba, founder of Aikido: Ueshiba, M. (2013). *Budo: Teachings of the Founder of Aikido*. New York: Kodansha USA.

⁷ Funakoshi, G. (1938). *The Twenty Guiding Principles of Karate: The Spiritual Legacy of the Master*. Translated by John Teramoto, 2003. New York, London, Tokyo: Kodansha International



warrant further investigation in order to facilitate a better understanding their significance for martial arts and *kata*.

Following an acceptance of the inevitability of death, what follows is what is referred to in Zen Buddhism as 'Mushin'; no-mind, or a state of mindlessness. This is not a state of mindlessness in the classic Western idiom, but instead infers a freeing of the mind as per Nagatomo's (2015, p. 205) definition:

No-mind is a free mind that is not delimited by ideas, desires, and images. No-mind is a state of mind in which there is neither a superimposition of ideas nor a psychological projection. That is, no-mind is a practical transcendence from the everyday mind, without departing from the everydayness of the world.

It is believed that by entering into this state of mindlessness by accepting death, a warrior may focus on the Zen principles of morally and socially valued behaviour, pursuing such practices as honour and respect and the other building blocks of society, that epitomise the scholarly warrior (Trimble & Morris, 1995; Deshimaru, 1982; Sasaki, 2008). It is felt that through such diligent practice and embodiment of the values of *Bushido*, a state of purity may be attained, and that enlightenment may be accomplished through physical practice and not only through zazen (meditation); "matter and logic and body and spirit are inseparable" Sasaki (2008, p. 48). This belief is most evident in *Aikido* when Kamata and Shimizu (1992, p. 5) proclaimed "*Aikido* is 'Zen in motion,' while Zen is merely '*Aikido* at rest'". It has likewise been articulated that the mental component to *Budo* is inextricably linked to Zen, and that "martial arts plus Zen equals Japanese *Budo*" (Deshimaru, 1982, p. 19).

While *Bushido* and *Bujutsu* may not be as central to Japanese society as once it was, it is nevertheless survived by and through its modern counterparts, the *Budo* martial arts, and now exists worldwide. Deshimaru (1982, p. 21) and Matsunobu (2007, p. 21) discuss the importance of Japanese spiritual teachings on focussing us on the "here and now" and Bolelli (2008, p. 70-71) adds that "few things teach us to be focussed on the here and now" like *kata*. Therefore, *kata* could be representative of the *Bushido* way of developing and practicing Zen principles. Matsunobu (2011), Rafolt (2014) and Sasaki (2008) refer to *kata* as a story of lineage, folk tales or stories, or cultural heritage and so it could be that *Budo kata* is a psycho-physical allegory to the harmonious and reciprocal development of *Bushido* spiritual teachings.

4. Socio-political antecedents to the change from *Bujutsu* to *Budo*

Bu is a word found throughout Japanese martial culture with terms such as *budo*, *bujutsu* and *bushido*. As reported by Shun (2006) there remains debate over the use of the terms *bushido* and *budo*, as the meaning of *budo* differs based on the period discussed, however *bu* remains in consistent usage. Commonly translated as 'martial', Wilson (2010) examines the characters that make up *bu*, concluding that "*bu* is constructed from the characters meaning "arms of war" or "violence," and "to stop, prohibit, or bring to an end." Therefore, *bu* is more accurately translated as "to stop violence," or perhaps "to bring about peace"; this interpretation is consistent with Funakoshi's (1973, p. 247) explanation of the meaning of *Budo*⁸. Respected karate-ka⁹ Kousaku Yokota explains how *Bujutsu* could be considered the "art of fighting or killing", and encompasses a 'win at all costs' mentality required for battlefield survival (Yokota, 2010, p. 185). Conversely, *Budo* could be considered the "art of living or life" and enables a practitioner to live "honestly and righteously or at least with principles". Expanding on both these points, Deshimaru (1982, p. 11; p. 46) reports that the ideogram for *bu* means to "the cease the struggle" and that "in *Budo* the point is ... to find peace and mastery of the self".

With this consideration, what brought about this simple, yet significant, change in nomenclature, from *jutsu* (art) to *do* (way)? To understand this one must examine the contextual

⁸ Molle (2010, p.88) reports a potential semantic error here as the translation could also be used to mean "advancing with a spear", however the translation offered above is reflective of the spirit adopted within *budo* philosophy.

⁹ The suffix *-ka* indicates a practitioner of an art, i.e. karate-ka, judo-ka, aikido-ka

history and development of the Japanese martial arts, as well as the goals and aspirations of their founders. This seemingly straightforward change would have substantial implications for *kata's* place in these martial forms since, according to Matsunobu (in press) and Schippers (2010), *Budo* as a cultural practice continues to evolve and is continually open for recontextualisation.

Examining the history of Japan, Gluck (1985) reports how the ushering in of the Meiji restoration (1868-1912) heralded significant sociocultural changes within Japan and its territories as the ideological stance of the new regime clashed with the old. In a relatively short period the samurai class saw much of their power eroded by a new imperial Japan; the carrying of swords was prohibited, and suddenly the masters of many martial art (*Bujutsu*) schools found their arts shunned as relics of the past and anachronistic symbols in a changing society. Molle (2010, p. 85) highlights the attributes of that which may be considered *Bujutsu*:

In the beginning martial arts were created for warfare, to defeat a person or to defend oneself from physical threat. The term referred to any sort of codified system for fighting, or traditions of training, invented by society to prepare highly specialized individuals to face conflict.

With *bujutsu* forms becoming seen as a distasteful legacy of the ruling samurai class their future in contemporary Japan was threatened, and even to this day it has been reported that “Japanese society has lost its interest in both modern and ancient martial ways” (Rafolt, 2014, p.184) as a post World War II Japan came to terms with its nationalistic and militaristic heritage. However, that this heritage continues to exist in modern societies globally, and are applauded for their pedagogical values in Western cultures (Sugie, 2009; Kanno, 2009), can be attributed to those we refer to as ‘the great reformers’; Kano, Ueshiba, Funakoshi and Awa, who redeveloped their arts from *jutsu* and made them *do*; respectively, *Judo*, *Aikido*, *Shotokan Karate-do*, and *Kyudo*. The change in purpose brought about by these martial artists was summarised by Green and Svinth (2010, p. 390):

Martial arts whose names end with the suffix *-jutsu* (e.g., *jujutsu*, *kenjutsu*) are combative systems for self-protection, whereas those whose names end with the suffix *-do* (e.g., *judo*, *kendo*) are spiritual systems for self-perfection (Draeger, 1973-1974, vol. 2, 19). According to Draeger, the *-jutsu* systems primarily emphasize combat, followed by discipline, and lastly, morals, whereas the *-do* systems are chiefly concerned with morals, followed by discipline and aesthetic form (Draeger, 1973-1974, col. 1, 36).

Jigoro Kano (1860-1938) documented well his struggles in creating and promoting *judo*. Kano was a proponent of *jujutsu*, however he felt that an underlying or guiding principle was missing. He concluded that the “efficient use of mental and physical energy” (Kano, 1986, p. 16) was the absent component and advocated the joint development of mind and body as a lifelong pursuit in a form of “ethical training” (Kano, 1986, p. 23); thus was born *judo*. This fundamental belief in lifelong self-development proves to be the common ground on which all the aforementioned martial arts were founded. Scrutinising the words of the founders of these martial arts finds their choice of language to be of particular note with frequent uses of words one would associate with Confucian and Zen practices; ‘path’, ‘journey’, ‘destination’, ‘guide’. These denote a philosophical and ideological belief that each *do* represents a path to enlightenment in the holistic spiritual term. It is not uncommon to find martial artists writing on the subject of Zen (or spirituality in general), and so it is refreshing to have the opposite perspective of a Zen master writing on the martial arts. Once more Deshimaru (1982, p.11) succinctly brings to light the characteristics of *budo* and *do*:

Budo is the way of the warrior; it embraces all the Japanese martial arts. It explores through direct experience and in depth the relationship between ethics, religion, and philosophy. Its association with sports is a very recent development; the ancient writings are essentially concerned with a particular form of cultivation of the mind and a reflection upon the nature of the self: who am I? *What* is I? ... *Do*, the way, is the method, the teaching, that enables you to understand perfectly the nature of your own mind and self

Rafolt’s (2014) work on the transformation from the ancient/traditional (*koryu bu do*) to the modern forms (*gendai bu do*) clarifies the process by which the spiritual component came to be



inextricably linked with martial practice. Rafolt (2014, p. 8) proposes a three stage strategy; “(a) demilitarization, (b) mystification and (c) cultural appropriation”. While much of the demilitarization came as a result of the post World War II pacifist attitudes, Kano pre-empted the change in the 1920’s when he chose to promote the health and ethical benefits of *judo* and wished to resist its appropriation for military training by the state (Rafolt, 2014); a point that would have considerable repercussions for *judo kata*. The mystification emerged from the de-emphasising of martial prowess, with the void filled with the assertion of self -development and -cultivation believed to lead to spiritual stability. This process was enhanced by the Western practitioners who saw the mysterious practices as being representative of Japanese culture. A prime example is *Aikido* where, as reported by Brown et al. (2009, p. 52), the “notion of spiritual cultivation has become elevated to the primary purpose and process whereby most Western people seem to perceive this martial art as a proper way toward a subjective spiritual path”. Drawing on Shi-Xu’s (2010) analysis of intercultural communication pedagogies, it is possible to claim the martial arts became a critical pedagogy of intercultural transmission; however the legitimacy of Western interpretation (or misinterpretation) is harder to discern and may simply be a product of Orientalism (Said, 1977; Clarke, 1997). The final of Rafolt’s (2014) stages, cultural appropriation, we will not discuss in great detail, instead we refer the reader to his original work. It is suffice to say that the mystification of martial arts contributed to their international popularity and diversification and the mixing of cultural values and pedagogies; leading to a fear of the loss of the original, traditional values they stood for.

Why this change of *jutsu* to *do* is so vital is due to the pedagogical shift towards *kata* as the principle form of training in most of these *Budo* martial arts. Funakoshi’s (1973, p. 211) words on the importance of *kata* are particularly relevant here. Funakoshi felt that *karate-do* should be studied with *kata* as “the principle method”, and indeed he references nearly all aspects of training in his publications to *kata* (Funakoshi, 1938, 1973, 1975, 1988). He maintains that the “tempering and disciplining” of the practitioner is the ultimate goal of *kata*, but also that it leads to an essential balancing of the physical body and covers the basis of self defence, increasing confidence and leading to a sense of peace. Consequently, *kata* becomes a mental and physical unification process. This belief is accentuated where he uses a very strong word when comparing sparring with *kata* training, saying that sparring should not “corrupt” *kata* (Funakoshi, 1973, p. 211).

Practitioners and authors Trimble and Morris (1995) suggest that the transition from *jutsu* to *do* reflects the addition of a spiritual aspect to the physical, with *kata* representing the “interweaving of spiritual philosophy with physical violence”, and consequently “the art of despatching and enemy was raised to a spiritual level”. This pragmatic view asserts that “spirituality...made the martial artist a better fighter” (Trimble & Morris, 1995, p. 9), since the acceptance of the inevitability of death allowed one to pursue other causes (such as honour and respect) that are the cornerstones of society. This view is indicative of a still used Japanese term, ‘*bunbu ryudo*’, which represents the merger of both cultural (*bun*) and martial (*bu*) skills; thus translated as ‘scholarly or enlightened warrior’.

The complex interrelation of the development of *Bushido* and *Budo* would come to define the fundamental existence and purpose of *kata*. Accordingly, the contextual expansion is necessary as it is reflective of both the complexity and magnitude of historical practitioner and scholarly information available on the subject. Some may consider these points to be entirely philosophical and/or moral teachings, however what becomes clear, no matter the interpretation, is that religion and spirituality were at the very core of the development of the Japanese martial arts; whether this may be true today is harder to discern, but for many practitioners a non-religious holistic spirituality remains the fundamental purpose of continued practice in *budo*. By way of example of this latter point the experience of Hyams (1979, p. 2) seems particularly relevant:

Of course, it was not my intention when I started studying karate in 1952 to become involved with Zen or any other spiritual discipline. In fact, nothing could have been further from my mind. Had anyone told me where my path would eventually lead, I would probably have dismissed the notion as nonsense, because I associated Zen with mysticism and prided myself in being a pragmatist. Only after several years of training did I come to realize that the deepest purpose of the martial arts is to serve as a vehicle for personal spiritual development.

This statement illustrates a journey that many practitioners can relate to, and it is logical to argue that it is through increasing engagement with the spiritual legacy of *Bushido* that this occurs, a connection articulated by Nitobe (1908, p. 1):

the conditions of society which brought [Bushido] forth and nourished it have long disappeared; but as those far-off stars which once were and are not, still continue to shed their rays upon us, so the light of chivalry, which was a child of feudalism, still illuminates our moral path, surviving its mother institution.

The philosophical shift of *bujutsu* to *budo* can be argued to be the saving grace of the Japanese martial arts, allowing the ancient/traditional martial arts (*koryu buido*) to develop into their modern forms (*gendai buido*), while maintaining a lineage to the past masters of the arts. However, the question still arises as to what this has to do with *kata*, and why is *kata* so fundamental to Japanese martial practice?

5. *Budo* and *Kata* – the unique position of Jigoro Kano and *Judo*

Kata occupies a significant portion of the practice of the *budo* martial arts. The use of *kata* in the martial arts originated during peaceful periods when teachers of the martial arts needed a way in which to teach and test their students without subjecting them to dangerous combat (Guttmann & Thompson, 2001); a practical consideration that remains today. The various styles of karate (Gojo-ryu, Shito-ryu, Shotokan, Kyukoshin etc.) have anywhere between 8 and 80 *kata*, each comprising a predetermined solo performance of varying length and complexity, and are used as a principle training method from the earliest stage. Kodokan *judo* consists of 8 *kata* involving a prearranged self defence routine between attacker (*tori*) and defender (*uke*), and are typically taught only from 4th kyu onwards. *Aikido* is less straight forward as, based on Ueshiba's (2013) teachings, no *kata* are mentioned. However, some *Aikido* practitioners would define *aikido as kata* training entirely, while others have incorporated *kata* as part of a grading criteria akin to *judo*. This belief was aptly articulated by Kohn (2001, p. 164-165):

Aikido practice is centred on learning a series of forms/movements (*kata*) in which the student must participate as the executor of the technique (*nage* - the one who has been attacked and who then throws or pins the attacker) and the receiver (*Uke* - the one who attacks *nage* with a strike or a grab and then absorbs *nage's* technique by rolling or break falling) in paired exercises. In the *kata* of *aikido*, unlike those of other martial arts, emphasis is placed upon the correct 'feeling' of execution rather than visual correctness.

Finally, *Kyudo* is a concept altogether removed from the other *budo* forms. The aim (pardon the pun) is less about the scoring ability of the fired arrow, and more about the perfection of form that leads to the release of the arrow; thus, *kyudo* may also be considered entirely *kata*.

As any discussion on the history and development of *kata* in all these martial arts would be lengthy and intricate, as well as possibly confusing, we instead wish to contrast the position of *kata* in Shotokan *karate-do* and *judo* as the words of Funakoshi and Kano, respectively, provide an interesting antithesis to each other.

Funakoshi (1975) documented well his own learning of *kata*; indeed, *kata* was the principle method by which he was taught, often being made to practice one to exhaustion, over several months, by his teachers (Itosu and Asato) until they were happy. For his own part, Funakoshi advocated a "middleway" (Funakoshi, 1973, p. 39), learning several *kata* then returning for renewed practice and understanding. Of great significance, however, is that Funakoshi consistently argues that *kata* training should always take precedence over sparring. This conviction is exonerated with even the most cursory glance of '*Karate-do Nyumon*' and '*Karate-do Kyohan*' (Funakoshi, 1973; 1988) where nearly every aspect of karate training is attributed or referenced to *kata*, such as the study of *nagewaza* (throwing techniques) and the 'three cardinal points'¹⁰.

¹⁰ "(1) light and heavy application of strength, (2) expansion and contraction of the body, and (3) fast and slow movements in techniques" (Funakoshi, 1973, p. 40).



Judo is in a unique position compared to the other *budo* arts. The sportification of *judo* has been both rapid and continual since its origin, with *kata* now rarely taught, developed, or practiced even by experienced *judoka*; *randori* (free practice) has taken precedence. On face value this seems to follow the belief of Kano who, on the subject of the unified development of mind and body, stated that “of the two, *randori* is the more effective” (Kano, 1986, p. 22). This places Kano in a diametrically opposite view to Funakoshi. There is a suggestion by Deshimaru (1982, p. 49) that “a *judoka* who learns nothing but *judo* is not a true *judoka*”, citing *kyudo* (archery) that eventually places precedence on mind and consciousness over technique, which may be said to support Kano’s viewpoint where freedom is a greater teacher. However, despite Kano’s assertions, he nevertheless maintained *kata* in *judo*, and would not have done so were they not of import. Therefore, we wish to present an interpretation of why Kano deemphasised *kata*’s place in *judo*.

Jigoro Kano was a very educated man and moved well in social circles; and as previously mentioned he foresaw the social revolution coming when he decided to change from *jutsu* to *do*. His ability as a social agent influenced and enabled him to demilitarise *jujutsu* into *judo* in order to make it a socially acceptable practice in a changing Japan (Rafolt, 2014, p. 187), and while the other martial arts continually promoted the martial characteristics and principles of *kata*, Kano deliberately shifted public focus on to a safer, sporting aspect of *judo*. However, if his Kodokan *Judo* book (Kano, 1986) is studied one will find two notable areas. Firstly, *judo kata* contains all the practical self defence components of *judo*, utilising strikes and kicks as well as throws, locks, chokes and strangles. Secondly, his book actively teaches a *judoka* how to perform karate style kicks, punches and blocks, but they are cunningly hidden at the back of the book in a chapter called ‘Health and First Aid’ in a *kata* called *Seiryoku Zen’yo Kokumim Taiiku*¹¹. The stated purpose of this *kata* is for physical and mental development, but also to serve as preliminary training for advanced combat forms as the exercises “have direct applications in self-defense” (Kano, 1986, p. 239). As researchers and practitioners we believe Kano effectively ‘hid’ the *bu* of *judo* within *kata*, deflected focus from it, but kept it there for all his dedicated and sufficiently advanced students to discover for themselves that *judo* is truly *budo*. As further evidence, it is well documented by both Kano and Funakoshi that Funakoshi was asked to teach karate at the Kodokan to *judoka* at Kano’s request. Why would he have his students learn techniques they cannot use in *randori* unless he felt they were important for them to know and, eventually, use or defend themselves against?

6. *Kata* as pedagogy

In order to discuss the pedagogy of *kata* practice this section will draw primarily from the comprehensive works on the subject by Matsunobu (2007; 2011; in press). Although written in relation to music education, these sources are nevertheless thoroughly researched, expertly articulated, and are widely applicable to martial arts *kata*. As such Matsunobu’s ideas represent an empirically rigorous framework in which it is possible to integrate and contextualise the martial artist’s perspective on the subject.

6.1. *What is it?*

Matsunobu (2011) refers to *kata* as a somatic form of embodied learning and is considered an important cultural pedagogy. In its simplest mode, *kata* training is about the repetition, imitation, and mastery of an accepted form of artistry. Although parallels can be drawn with other practices worldwide (e.g. gymnastic routines, shadow boxing, military drill, musical techniques etc) they do not constitute this distinction of *kata* since the sociocultural outlook on creativity differs significantly. In Western societies and education, creativity is typically discussed in terms of novelty, invention, individual accomplishment, and emphasises future direction (Rudowicz (2004). Conversely, Eastern society values reinterpretation, renovation, adaptation, modification, harmony with nature, and a healthy respect for the past (Matsunobu, 2011). The latter approach has its roots in Confucian teachings which, considering the influence Confucianism had on *Bushido*, may explain why *kata* was so endeared to the martial arts. Consequently, Matsunobu (2011), supported by Rafolt (2014) and Sasaki (2008), discuss *kata* as a bodily form of

¹¹ Chapter and *kata* name are as they appear in the UK edition of the book.

lineage, preserving the teachings and practices of great artists. It is believed that in striving to honour the preceding masters of an art, a new practitioner may reach the state of mastery of those that came before. Therefore, *kata* is primarily about the imitation of a given form. The creation of new *kata* is historically only permitted to be done by gifted artists who have mastered their arts over several decades, as only then may creativity spring forth a new level of mastery; this is evident in much of the *Budo* arts where few 'new' *kata* have been widely accepted since the founding of each art.

6.2. Japanese views on learning

Rohlen and LeTendre (1996/1998) report how the pedagogy of *kata* has been criticised as being formulaic and stifling of creativity, however, as mentioned, in Japanese society, creativity "is believed to be achieved only through imitation and repetition" (Matsunobu, 2011, p. 46). This is an important cultural distinction as imitation is also considered the highest form of praise in Japanese culture, and mastery has an entirely different connotation. Succinctly highlighting this distinction, Rohlen and LeTendre (1996/1998, p. 371) observed:

Whereas Americans relegate imitation to a position inferior to creativity, Japanese culture elevates imitation as a powerful road to mastery. ... The term "mastery" has meanings far different from our western sense of domination and rule. Mastery is a process of adapting oneself to the material rather than of controlling or subordinating the material to oneself.

In the Japanese logic of practice, personalisation before a form becomes a natural habit (or 'mastered') is not considered genuine learning, rather, true individuality can only be expressed once the self has conformed to the art (Matsunobu, 2011; in press). The nature of this statement is highly indicative of the concept of 'mindlessness', which has been acknowledged as an essential component of *Bushido* and *Budo* practice, and perhaps explains further why *kata* is considered so important to many in the martial art community.

6.3. How is *kata* used?

Three stages of mastery are advocated by Funakoshi (1973, p. 40), 1) learn the sequence, 2) correct stance and technique, 3) understand. In this process there is a belief that learning body concentration before mental concentration is paramount; a method confirmed by Matsunobu's (2011) work on creativity. It is considered that embodied learning leads to an inner experience or richness; an experience not clouded by external influence or polluted by a mind-centred approach. Likely owing to this philosophy, the actual method of delivery is very different from a typical Western educational pedagogy. Whereas in most educational settings a concept is taught, broken down, analysed, re-assembled and then (hopefully) understood, traditionally in *kata* a non-step by step approach is considered the norm, learning a *kata* in its entirety until it can be imitated and only then will explanation or application be explored; although in martial arts the approach does vary according to each teacher, sometimes being taught in sections. Additionally, as Hare's (1998) work on *noh* music found, much of the instruction is typically non-verbal, and discussion for understanding and meaning are avoided. As prime example, Trimillos' (1989, p. 39) reports how in *kata* learning "the teacher seldom identifies the error, but waits until the phrase is played correctly and then expresses approval". The purpose of this instructional approach is that the emphasis should be on how an individual 'feels' when performing, as per Kohn's (2001) earlier assertion with *aikido*, and so the interruption of a *kata* is typically considered detrimental to the performers' state of inner experience, and the imparting of knowledge or insight is not necessarily the purpose for which a student has been asked to perform *kata*. Funakoshi (1975) details similar experience in his own learning of *kata* where his teachers would maybe nod his head in approval and nothing more would be said. It is highly conceivable that the alien nature of this method to Western practitioners is what has led to many misunderstandings of *kata* or its outright rejection due to a misfit with the Western cultural habitual. Yokota (2010) reinforces this point when he discusses how the Japan Karate Association (JKA) created source material on *kata* almost exclusively to appease Western practitioners who were full of questions, and not merely content to practice their *kata*.

The *learning* of a *kata* is not the same as the *mastery* of *kata*; as previously acknowledged, knowledge of the sequence is not enough. The achieving of mastery, in the Eastern sense of the



word, involves returning to the general spiritual undertones of Japanese artistry, and specifically to the concept of mindlessness. This can be broken down into three distinct stages; 1) learning the form; 2) reforming the self; 3) forgetting. The first stage has been addressed in the use of repetition and imitation of a precedent artist. The second stage, for many martial artists, is the hardest and the stage at which many will remain (Bolelli, 2008). When trying to reform the body to the material it is often difficult to avoid individual expression, particularly early on when basic technique is not yet refined enough to prevent a mind-centred approach (Matsunobu, in press). What is desired at this stage is that the artist is shaped into the form of the art itself. Anecdotal evidence from martial artists confirms this stage in the process where they often report attending a class in another martial art discipline and are very quickly identified as 'a student of [insert martial art]' since they are unable to cease performing in a manner that has become a natural expression. Kohn's extensive work on *aikido* (2001; 2003; 2007; 2008) discusses this concept as the sculpting of the self and the shaping of discourse through martial practice. This leads nicely on to the third stage; forgetting. Bolelli (2008) reports how upon being labelled 'expert', a practitioner must then learn to forget, returning to a beginner's instinct but with all the knowledge and experience gained since. In quoting Lao Tzu he says "in comprehending all knowledge, can you renounce the mind?" This final stage involves reaching a state of no-mind, *mushin*, when, and only when, will a form be given spirit. These perspectives concur with Matsunobu's (2011, p. 50) comments on *kata* when he stated "from this logic emerges a respect for the achievements of their predecessors and a cultivation of spirit by subordination to the art form".

What emerges from this analysis is that the pedagogy of *kata* is primarily concerned with developing the relationship between the performer and the tools of her/his art, those around them, and their own level of mind-body unity. While many martial artists consider *kata* to be either a tool for self defence or an aesthetic performance, the social aspect of *kata* is essential to the pedagogy of practice. Through strict imitation of *kata*, something that is supposed to contain the core values of the art (Bolelli, 2008), students become involved in a practice of embodied social values related to their respective discipline (Matsunobu, 2011; Rohlen and LeTendre, 1996/1998). It is this characteristic that separates *kata* as a meaningful form from *katachi*, an empty form.

6.4. Spiritual undertones

It is likely already evident that the philosophical approach to creativity and *kata* based learning is intertwined with the spiritual roots from whence it came. The epistemological stance of traditional Japanese pedagogies is principally concerned with the deepening, not broadening, of self knowledge; experiences of mind, body and spirit (Matsunobu, 2007). This sentiment is reflective of a precept quoted by Funakoshi (1975, p. 38); "although the doorway is small, go deeply inward". Much of this study has evolved thanks to the analysis and interpretation of words, and expanding this process to examine the very names of *kata* yields further clues to the spiritual aspects of *kata*. Taking the *kata* of Shotokan as an example, their etymology is steeped in symbolism; Bassai (to storm a fortress), Tekki (iron horse), Gankaku (crane on a rock), Enpi (flying swallow), Unsu (hands in the clouds). It is believed, according to Bolelli (2008, p. 70), that these names represent "oracular messages" to allow a practitioner to tap into the correct form of energy required for a performance, and that they should subsequently embody the translation within their performance. Considering the sense of holistic spiritual that is at the very foundation of *budo* this becomes a reasonable assumption for the purpose of *kata* based training. since the *kata* approach to creative learning advocates a reforming of the corporeal being through a defined model, with a sense of imbuing the practitioner with the essence of artistry (Matsunobu, 2011). Deshimaru (1982, p. 45) calls this *dokan*, essence-in-repetition. Although discussed in regards to *zazen*, the notion could be expanded to the pedagogy of *kata* where, referencing Keister's (2004) work, Matsunobu (2011, p. 50) proclaims "the goal of such practices is not the perfection of an art object as an end itself, but the development of the self as a never-ending, lifelong process". This is a goal reflected in the life-long pursuit of *budo* advocated by *budo*. This may also give rise to the view that *kata* can become the embodied essence of *budo*.

If the interpretation presented thus far holds then two arguments for spirituality present themselves. 1) If *Budo* and holistic spirituality are mutually co-dependent, and *kata* represents and develops the core values of each martial art, then it could be said that *kata* represents a spiritual

pedagogy. 2) if the previous point is accepted, then *budo* that do not specify *kata* in the mode commonly recognised (*aikido*, *kyudo*), but are deigned to be spiritual practices for *misogi*, ‘purification of mind and body’ through form, then these martial arts could be considered living and continual *budo kata*. To further demonstrate this latter point, Noguchi (2004) explains how *seiza*, a traditional form of Japanese meditation, can be considered a *kata*, used to enter into what he referred to as a “bone-centred state”, allowing a practitioner to enter “a state of true receptivity”. Noguchi (2004) elaborates how the standing position in *Kyudo* prevents the conscious use of the muscles to ‘pull’ the bow, instead allowing the correct energy to enter into the body and giving the form spirit as Bolelli (2008) suggested; you become one with the form and with nature. It has been said that the goal of *kata* training is “to fuse the individual to the form so that the individual becomes the form and the form becomes the individual” (Yano, 2002, p. 26).

7. Sacralisation

Coinciding with the social changes that led to the redevelopment of *bujutsu* into *budo* came the sacralisation of martial practice. The term, in relation to martial arts, was explained by Brown, et al. (2009, p. 56):

The physical "end" (purpose) of being capable of a rapid deadly response to a physical attack, being too dangerous to practise in "reality", becomes an experience, ability and purpose that is virtually unobtainable, is very rarely observed and difficult to demonstrate in a peaceful, law abiding society. One consequence of this is the devolution of the ends (real self-defence) to the means through which the ends *might* be achieved (martial skill). Martial skills as demonstrated by master practitioners quickly take on an almost transcendent, ethereal quality: This is *sacralisation*.

Perhaps owing to the religious composition of *bushido* it has been remarked that “Zen and the Way have flowed together”, and yet the term ‘Zen’ is only commonly used in isolation by Westerners (Deshimaru, ref, p.46-47). As a result of this, it is typically only in Western texts that there is an attempt to deliberately associate Zen (or spirituality) with the purpose of *budo* martial arts, thereby intentionally sacralising their own practices. In contrast, the Eastern scholars and martial artists speak of the two as interchangeable and interdependent as the concept is already culturally acknowledged and accepted. This form of sacralisation is evident in many published works by martial art practitioners where many an author refers to students of the founders of *budo* schools as ‘disciples’. Whether deliberate or not, this choice of word may be indicative of an ideo-religious embellishment of the relationship between teacher and student; a point further accentuated by the almost canonization or deification -like reverence of the founder upon their death, and could therefore point to the development of a fundamental socio-religious belief system in *budo* created by their own practitioners.

The implications for *kata* is that they become sacralised rituals that may only be performed in ‘the right and true way’ which has implications for creativity. While the Japanese pedagogy of *kata* relies on strict imitation, Matsunobu (2011) explains how creativity is born from imitation of *kata*, and that one must eventually transcend the original mould. The danger of sacralised *kata* is that they may become restrictive and anachronistic for future practitioners if all creativity is withheld even if they have mastered their form. As a practitioner this is already evident in the *budo* world where many schools have abandoned *kata* entirely, or changed its purpose to no more than a sporting form. Even worse, some ‘traditional’ schools have re-appropriated and sacralized *kata* and will only accept the ‘correct’ form. This leaves other practitioners, such as the first author of the paper, who have incorporated subtle variations and developments to *kata*, stuck somewhere in the middle, not accepted by either group. With sacralization comes ostracism.

8. Conclusion: *Kata* – the true essence of *Budo* martial arts?

This paper has sought to bring forth a greater contextualisation to the place of *kata* based learning in the Japanese *budo* martial arts as they exist today. Based on the research presented it would seem reasonable to conclude that the problem facing the continued existence of both *kata*



and 'true' *budo* emerges from the lack of understanding of the sociocultural setting of their devising. This is particularly true of *kata* in Western society where our outlook on creativity, learning, and spirituality is markedly different to the East. As a result, when *kata* is not 'explained' to a practitioner many will fail to ascribe any substantial meaning/importance to its existence and fail to realise that this is *shugyo*, life training, a journey and not a destination. Others may simply consign *kata* to the place of tradition or change its fundamental purpose for other ends before they have patiently endured the quest for mastery, where they reach a point of self realisation that might confer *why* they do *kata*. What this only serves to demonstrate is a failure to embody the practice and culture, to resist the reforming of the corporeal self, to close the mind and let individuality repel the spirit of the form. Should a practitioner embrace *kata* they should become more receptive to the social, moral, ethical and holistic spiritual purpose of their art. These are the goals for which *kata* was created.

Funakoshi (1988, p. 12) felt that "the true nature of *karate-do* cannot be explained in words even if one's efforts with pen or tongue are carried to the point of exhaustion and beyond", an assertion likewise attributed to *Budo* and reflected in the poem quoted by Ueshiba (2013, p. 28):

True *budo*
 Cannot be described
 By words or letters;
 The god's will not allow you
 To make such explanations.

Despite the apparent wisdom in these views, Funakoshi's explanation of 'kara' may herald a valuable contribution to explaining what this intended nature may be. Funakoshi says that 'Kara' from *karate-do* has the meaning "form is emptiness, emptiness is form itself" (1973, p. 4). The question is what is meant by emptiness? Funakoshi uses the analogy of bamboo to explain his statement: "Hollowness (emptiness) is unselfishness, straightness is obedience and gentleness, the knots are strength of character and moderation". So if we return to his words on the purpose of *kata* when he stated "the purpose of learning *kata* is not just for the sake of learning them but for the tempering and discipline of oneself", and also take into account how Funakoshi relates all aspects of *karate-do* to *kata* going so far as to say "karate, to the very end, should be practiced with *kata* as the principle method", then it is possible to make a bold, but logical, deduction. Returning to the etymology of *kata*, if *kata*=form and *kara*=form, and form=emptiness and emptiness=the core value of *budo karate-do*, then it is reasonable to suggest that *kata* represents the truest essence of *Budo*. Whether this essence is a form of holistic spirituality remains a debatable and highly contentious topic. Nevertheless, *kata* continues to occupy an essential role in the spiritual development of *Budo* practitioners; Sasaki (2008, p. 48) went so far as to say "to master the forms, one becomes 'enlightened'". If *Budo* cannot be explained by 'pen or tongue', then it may explain why the pedagogy of *kata* has become the bodily allusion and expression of the core values of the Japanese arts, and an essential pedagogy of intercultural transmission.

9. Areas for Future Research

The intention of this paper was to encourage further discussion on an often overlooked aspect of martial art practice. As a result we do not wish to be too directive in our suggestions for future research, but instead would like to highlight some developments that became apparent during the course of this study that we were not able to pursue.

While discussing the pedagogy of *kata* we suggested that one of the goals of *kata* is to provide an embodied form of social learning. The notion of having an embodied nature that is transferred through social settings is indicative of what Bourdieu referred to as 'habitus' (Bourdieu, 1977). *Kata* could, therefore, be seen as a construct for instilling socialised norms that provide lasting dispositions that transcend social contexts. Further to this we saw parallels with Giddens (2009) work on social interaction, particularly where the body becomes the agent of social interaction. We feel that further research on these two theories of embodied social interaction, in

isolation or combination, would be another worthwhile perspective from which to come to understand the purpose of *kata*.

Finally, the cultural significance of *kata* has been made apparent in this paper, but so too have the issues facing the place of *kata* outside its original cultural context. A further avenue of potential research lies in understanding the affect and reception of unique cultural martial pedagogies on international practitioners of a wider range Eastern movement forms.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Koji Matsunobu for his correspondence and for providing reference material that was invaluable in this project. Another thanks must go to Kousaku Yokota who gave up some of his time to discuss the content of his books and to share his views on the subject. Finally, to Paul Watson, my *sensei*, mentor, and friend who has been a guiding force and inspiration these last twenty years.

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