



KATA MAXIMS

By Scot Combs

NOTE These maxims are a distillation of thoughts and concepts we use to interpret our forms. I will add to them as new maxims become apparent.

Kata is not free fighting. The fighting in Kata happens at grabbing distance.

Technique is not determined by kata; it is determined by circumstance. As circumstances change, technique must also.

An interpretation of kata that will not work for the karateka must be set aside and the search must continue for a technique that will work for the karateka.

Learning a technique requires skill derived from adequate practice. No technique should be set aside until a full examination has been completed. (Try the technique on various body sizes and types. Consider your posture, breathing and the smallest detail in trying to understand the technique. If someone else of your size and body type can reliably perform the technique, you can too.)

All things being equal; the simplest interpretation of kata will probably be the correct one to use in self-defense. (adapted from Occam's Razor)

Kata remains the same; regardless of variation(s). Kata interpretations (bunkai, oyo, shorthand) change constantly with new understanding and insight.

Kata is a mnemonic device that helps us remember individual techniques.

Kata is a language that must be interpreted by each karateka on an individual basis.

Kata is a moving encyclopedia of techniques. Each karateka must test all techniques to find those suitable for inclusion into their personal set.

Even though the moves in kata are linked, techniques can be lifted out of context for purposes of effective self-defense.

Performing kata by yourself is only half the exercise. The other half is performing the interpretation with a partner.

Each kata interpretation should take into account most likely attack scenarios, worst case attack scenarios, timing, balance, likely responses, joint manipulation, unbalancing of the opponent, pressure point strikes, blunt trauma strikes and throws.