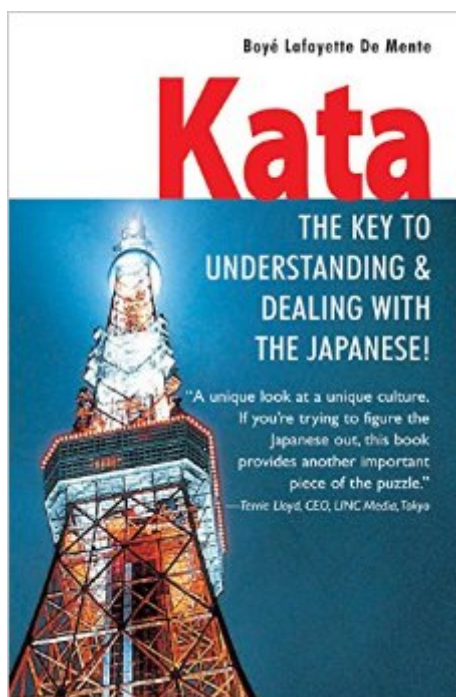


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Kata: The Key To Understanding And Dealing With The Japanese!



Synopsis

"A unique look at a unique culture. If you're trying to figure the Japanese out, this book provides another important piece of the puzzle." —Terrie Lloyd, CEO, LINC Media, Tokyo
In this first book ever to explain why the Japanese think and behave the way they do, veteran Japanologist Boye Lafayette De Mente, author of more than 30 books on Japan, unlocks the mystery of kata — the cultural molds that have traditionally shaped and defined the attitudes, behavior, and character of the Japanese and are primarily responsible for the traits and talents that make them different from other people. In 70 brief essays, ranging from "The Art of Bowing" and "Importance of the Apology" to "The Compulsion for Quality" and "Exchanging Name-Cards," the author looks at the origin, nature, use, and influence of kata (literally the form and order of doing things) in Japanese life and how this cultural conditioning causes the Japanese to think and react in the way they do. Because all relations with the Japanese are influenced by kata, the key to dealing with the Japanese in personal, business or political matters requires knowing how to work within the confines of kata and when to induce or compel them to break the kata and behave in a non-Japanese way.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This interesting little book manages to pack insightful observations about the history and permutations of traditional Japanese "kata," or form in 168 pages. The easiest way to understand kata is that it's the Japanese people's idea of the "correct" way of doing something, which in Western equivalent, is etiquette. The Japanese, having derived its culture from a military heritage, infuses "form" into every aspect of their lives: everything from the correct form of humility, to bowing,

exchanging name cards, ambiguity in giving answers, making an apology, dealing with foreigners, traveling in groups, and running an office. While this book seems to be geared more towards businessmen and women attempting or considering doing business with the Japanese, it also briefly looks at the cult of cuteness, infantilism, copying, and the Japanese approach to baseball. There's even a quick observation of the importance of role-playing (which some of us may know as cos-play) and that those we now see at the Hajaruku district, while appearing outlandish, will return to their staid office clothing come Monday morning. I read in other reviews that De Mente exhibits a certain ethnocentric arrogance in his look at Japanese culture (the author worked in Japan as a member of the U.S. Military Intelligence Agency in 1949), so I paid additional attention for that monster to rear its ugly head. But I found that that's precisely where the strength of some of De Mente's observations lie. No one ever learns anything when everyone is at their best behavior. The protection of etiquette is that it veils what we really want to say. Unfortunately, the quoted praises in the bookcover are from people in similar positions, meaning non-Japanese.

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