



JEET KUNE DO

Bruce Lee, born Lee Jun-fan (meaning 'return again') in San Francisco in 1940, developed Jeet Kune Do at age 27, finding himself unemployed after filming the first season of *The Green Hornet*. The previous 26 years of Lee's life had been full ones - he had lived for three years under Japanese occupation in Hong Kong, where he had also been a child movie star, a criminal street-fighter and a Cha Cha champion; he had returned, again, to America, where he studied philosophy, drama and psychology and taught Kung Fu. In 1967, however, stuck in supporting roles in American movies, Bruce Lee had time to think about emptiness.

After taking too long to defeat a challenger, Wong Jack Man, in an organised fight, Bruce Lee had concluded that the Wing Chun martial arts techniques he had learnt growing up were too rigid, too formalistic, too stuck in tradition and mixed up by historical reinterpretation to be of use to the 'fluid man', to a man faced with the chaos of a real-life fight. Jeet Kune Do would instead be a hybrid system, aiming to exist outside of traditional parameters and to teach responsiveness rather than formalised technique. It would be based on guiding philosophical principles – partiality, running to the extreme; fluidity, two halves of one whole and emptiness, the formless form. It would be the style without style:

"I hope to free my followers from clinging to styles, patterns, or moulds. Remember that Jeet Kune Do is merely a name used, a mirror in which to see "ourselves". . . Jeet Kune Do is not an organized institution that one can be a member of. Either you understand or you don't, and that is that." ~

~ Lee, Bruce (September 1971), "Liberate Yourself From Classical Karate", Black Belt Magazine (Rainbow Publications, Inc.) 9 (9): 24.



WORDS OF ADVICE

Don't think, *feel*.

It's like a finger pointing at the moon. Do not concentrate on the finger, or you will miss all of the heavenly glory. Open yourself and flow, my friend. We are always in a process of becoming and nothing is fixed. Be flexible to change with the ever changing.

Empty your mind, be formless, shapeless — like water. Now water can flow or it can crash. You put water in a cup, it becomes the cup; You put water into a bottle it becomes the bottle.

Be like water making its way through cracks. Do not be assertive, but adjust to the object, and you shall find a way around or through it. If nothing within you stays rigid, outward things will disclose themselves.

Moving, be like water. Still, be like a mirror. Respond like an echo.

And when one has reached maturity in the art, one will have a formless form. It is like ice dissolving in water - when one has no form, one can be all forms. (To achieve this) There must be a 'being' instead of a 'doing' - use only that which works and take it from any place you can find it. Hack away at the unessential; not the daily increase, but the daily decrease.

And as you think, so shall you become.

