KRISHNAMURTI:
The Spiritual Force Behind Bruce Lee

In the teachings of Krishnamurti, Bruce Lee discovered the true foundation of jeet kune do.

By Robert Colet

"You cannot look through an ideology, through a screen of words, through hopes and fears," so says Krishnamurti. Applying this to the martial arts, Bruce Lee finds, "You cannot express and be alive through static put-together form, through stylized movement." So began Lee's profound revolution of the martial arts. Empty-hand combat would never again be the same.

Bruce Lee found in the teachings of Krishnamurti the foundation of jeet kune do. Remember: We are talking about Lee's philosophy and its relationship to the martial arts. We are not taking into consideration the combat aspects of JKD. There has already been plenty written on that aspect of the art from such distinguished experts as Dan Inosanto and Paul Yunak. Rather, we are concerned with the "mental" or "spiritual" side of JKD, which is how the style differs so dramatically from its counterparts. The foundation of traditional martial arts are kata (forms), where the practitioner uses singular movement to simulate a fighting technique. He imitates the kata until they
Krishnamurti

You cannot look through an ideology, through a screen of words, through hopes and fears.

We are those books, we are those ideas, so heavily conditioned are we by them.

As long as I am looking at life from a particular point of view or from a particular experience I have cherished, or from some particular knowledge I have gathered, which is my background, which is the “me,” I cannot see totally. ... I can see the totality of something only when thought does not interfere.

Truth is not something dictated by your pleasure or pain, or by your conditioning as a Hindu or whatever religion you belong to.

We accept a standard of behavior as part of our tradition as Hindus or Christians or whatever we happen to be. We look to someone to tell us what is right or wrong behavior, what is right or wrong thought, and in following this pattern our conduct and our thinking become mechanical, our responses automatic.

The man who is really serious, with the urge to find out what truth is, what love is, has no concept at all. He lives only in what is.

If any system teaches you how to be attentive, then you are attentive to the system and that is not attention.

... the only way to look at yourself is totally, immediately, without time; and you can see the totality of yourself only when the mind is not fragmented.

... if you follow what the psychologist says or what I say, you are understanding our theories, our dogmas, our knowledge, you are not understanding yourself.

... if you say, “There is nothing much to learn about

Bruce Lee

You cannot express and be alive through static put-together form, through stylized movement.

We are those kata, we are those classical blocks and thrusts, so heavily conditioned are we by them.

You cannot see a street fight in its totality, observing it from the viewpoint of a boxer, a kung-fu man, a karateka, a wrestler, a judo man and so forth. You can see clearly only when style does not interfere.

Fighting is not something dictated by your conditioning as a kung-fu man, a karate man, a judo man or what not.

The secondhand artist blindly following his sensei or sifu accepts his pattern. As a result, his action and, more importantly, his thinking become mechanical. His responses become automatic, according to set patterns, making him narrow and limited.

The man who is really serious, with the urge to find out what truth is, has no style at all. He lives only in what is.

If any style teaches you a method of fighting, then you might be able to fight according to the limit of that method, but that is not actually fighting.

Self-expression is total, immediate, without conception of time, and you can only express that if you are free, physically and mentally, from fragmentation.

If you follow the classical pattern, you are understanding the routine, the tradition, the shadow — you are not understanding yourself.

The classical man is just a bundle of routine, ideas and
myself because I am just a bundle of memories, ideas, experiences and traditions, then you have stopped learning about yourself...the moment you have a conclusion or start examining from knowledge, you are finished, for then you are translating every living moment in terms of the old.

...rituals are vain repetition which offer a marvelous and respectable escape from self-knowledge (from Commentaries on Living — first series).

So to go into the question of what love is we must first free it from the encrustation of centuries, put away all ideals and ideologies of what it should or should not be.

Or is it because you have been told by thousands of years of propaganda that you must have an ideal...?

You have a concept of what you should be and how you should act, and all the time you are in fact acting quite differently; so you see that principles, beliefs and ideals must inevitably lead to hypocrisy and a dishonest life.

When there is no center then there is love.

You have now started by denying something absolutely false — the traditional approach — but if you deny it as a reaction you will have created another pattern in which you will be trapped...

...in the greater the lesser is, but in the lesser the greater is not.

Forms are vain repetitions which offer an orderly and beautiful escape from self-knowledge with an alive opponent.

If you want to understand the truth in martial arts, to see any opponent clearly, you must throw away the notion of styles or schools, prejudices, likes and dislikes, and so forth.

A so-called martial artist is the result of three thousand years of propaganda and conditioning.

Why do individuals depend on thousands of years of propaganda? They may preach “softness” as the ideal to “firmness,” but when “what is” hits, what happens? Ideals, principles, the “what should be” leads to hypocrisy.

When there is no center, no circumference, then there is truth. When you freely express, you are the total style.

Do not deny the classical approach simply as a reaction, for you will have created another pattern and trapped yourself there.

The greater (expression) is not found in the lesser (expression) but the lesser is found within the greater.

Lee realized the limitations in every martial art. Through Krishnamurti, Lee shattered those limitations, challenged tradition and broke uncharted ground.

was constantly “creatively discontented” with the state of martial art. He realized the limitations in every martial art, including wing chun. He shattered these limitations, challenged tradition and broke uncharted ground.

He had to tell the world of his discovery. So he went to Hong Kong and made several movies. Then came his enduring masterpiece, Enter the Dragon.

His mission was complete. He revolutionized “consciousness” of the martial arts. Through motion pictures he made the world and martial arts community witness his discovery. He brought upon himself and the world a new vision.

And then he left as quickly as he appeared. But by then he had completed his process and yearned for peace. It came suddenly — too suddenly — but nevertheless, he fulfilled his mission.

Just like life itself, the martial arts go on, forever searching for fuller expression.

About the Author: Robert Colet is a freelance writer in Hauppauge, New York.