



Jeet [Intercept] Kune[Fist] Do [Way]

JKD History and Origin:: Understanding JKD Part 1

Jeet Kune Do, or 'JKD', literally means *The Way of the Intercepting Fist*. The term was first coined by Bruce Lee in a conversation with Dan Inosanto, as the name for his philosophy on training and fighting in 1967. Bruce was commenting on the efficiency of the *stop-hit* as a means of countering in western fencing.

The *stop-hit* in fencing is when you do not parry and then counter as two moves, rather it's all done in one step. When the opposite attacks, you intercept his move with a thrust or hit of your own. It is designed to score a hit in the midst of the attackers' actions.

Bruce was commenting on this to Dan and reflecting that it is the highest and most economical of all the counters. Bruce said, "We should call our method the 'stop-hitting fist style,' or the 'intercepting fist style.'"

Dan asked, "What would that be in Chinese?"

Bruce responded, "That would be Jeet Kune Do."

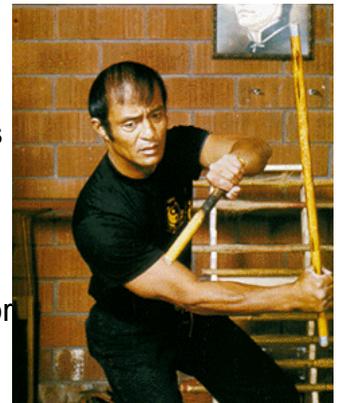
And so it was.

It was actually Dan Inosanto who shortened the name down to the acronym "JKD" originally and Bruce liked it. Eventually Bruce and his students all started using 'jkd' as an adjective in order to describe things they liked. For instance, "The food at that restaurant is JKD!" "Man, that car is so JKD!" or, "The movie I saw last night was JKD."

As Bruce deliberated to himself over his fight with Wong Jack Man in 1964 [see Bruce Lee's History], he started to reconsider what was necessary, or "useful," and what wasn't in the fight, and in his training methods. He thought there was a more efficient way of learning to fight - that there were limitations in what he knew as a martial artist, and began refining his thoughts and training methods. He began to intensify his search for the ultimate reality in combat.

Bruce, unlike most others at the time, realized that there might be useful thoughts, concepts and techniques in other arts and philosophies. He began to branch out to all sorts of fighting styles like Fencing, Western Boxing, various Grappling arts, french savate, styles of Karate, Korean arts, Filipino arts... and so on. He realized no one style had all the "answers," and conversely, nor did he think any style was useless.

At the time there was an unhealthy pride held by the practitioners from different arts. They believed and contended their style or 'way' was the best



It was Dan Inosanto who introduced Bruce Lee to Filipino arts



and only, 'way.' Unfortunately, some still do today. Pride is a very dangerous and foolish thing.

Anyway, Bruce felt there were tremendous limitations in this thinking. He realized that if a practitioner was to limit him or herself to only one 'style' they were subject to the limited thinking of that style too.

It was this idea that drove him to the philosophy of, "Having no way, as way. Having no limitation, as limitation." This statement can be found in Cantonese characters surrounding the Yin and Yang symbol, encompassed by two circling arrows – all of which make up the symbol for Jeet Kune Do. The circular arrows in the JKD symbol were added by Bruce in an attempt to illustrate several things; the endless movement and change of the universe, a interplay between the opposites, energy flow and a non-stopping learning process of continuing growth.



Bruce himself frequently claimed that Jeet Kune Do was not a style but rather a personal expression after having experienced many styles. For instance, in a widely-used quote, Bruce stated;

*"I have not invented a "new style," composite, modified or otherwise that is set within distinct form as apart from "this" method or "that" method. On the contrary, I hope to free my followers from clinging to styles, patterns, or molds. 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. There is no mystery about my style. My movements are simple, direct and non-classical. The extraordinary part of it lies in its simplicity. Every movement in Jeet Kune-Do is being so of itself. There is nothing artificial about it. I always believe that the easy way is the right way. Jeet Kune-Do is simply the direct expression of one's feelings with the minimum of movements and energy. The closer to the true way of Kung Fu, the less wastage of expression there is. Finally, a Jeet Kune Do man who says Jeet Kune Do is exclusively Jeet Kune Do is simply not with it. He is still hung up on his self-closing resistance, in this case anchored down to reactionary pattern, and naturally is still bound by another modified pattern and can move within its limits. He has not digested the simple fact that truth exists outside all molds; pattern and awareness is never exclusive. Again let me remind you Jeet Kune Do is just a name used, a boat to get one across, and once across it is to be discarded and not to*



Bruce demonstrates a 3 inch punch for a TV audience

be carried on one's back." [emphasis added]

Bruce Lee did not invent something new. He sought to simplify what already was. He was not starting a new way of fighting, or trying to sell a brand name called "Jeet Kune Do." His intention was to free his students and efficiently maximize the understanding and practice of the martial way.

In the early days of his training here in America, Bruce began to see that Wing Chun placed too much emphasis on close range or in-fighting [hand techniques] at the expense of long ranger [kicking techniques] fighting. So Bruce began to incorporate some of the more refined kicks of the northern Chinese styles. It is this hybrid form of Wing Chun that today is referred to as Jun Fan Gung-fu. This is primarily what he taught in his Seattle and Oakland schools.

Bruce began a revolutionary pattern of thinking. As he progressed on this path of learning various different techniques and approaches he incorporated them into the curriculum he practiced and taught. A glance at the curriculum [list of techniques], from his Seattle based kwoon, to Oakland, to Los Angeles, shows significant differences in the lists of techniques. This is an illustration that he was changing and refining, adding and deleting, experimenting and evolving as his experiences progressed.

Once Jeet Kune Do was established as an entity unto itself [in Los Angeles by this time] Jun Fan was looked upon as the art that Bruce taught more in Seattle and Oakland. Jeet Kune Do, according to Dan Inosanto, is really a liberated form of Jun Fan; it encompasses much more, but Jun Fan is still part of the total art. You can't separate the two.

Sifu, Kevin Seaman points out, "Sijo [founder] Lee's art was constantly changing. The Jun Fan martial arts of 1964 looked somewhat different than 1965 and 1966, 1970, etc." This pattern remained ongoing until he died. It evolved into an individualized way of applying these principles and thoughts, which eventually became the art, science and philosophy of Jeet Kune Do.

Continue next to JKD Philosophy...
