STATEMENT DM066

Enter the Dragon? Wrestling with the Martial Arts Phenomenon
Part One: The Historical-Philosophical Backdrop
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High-flying kicks combined with deadly punches and lethal throws...A lone warrior single-handedly overpowering a band of burly attackers...An old sage imparting wisdom to a young, attentive disciple...

These images depict how many people perceive the martial arts (literally, the *arts of warfare*) — and for good reason. Such popular images of Asian-based fighting techniques stem largely from stylized portrayals on the silver screen.

Some of today's leading action stars have made it big because of the martial arts. Bruce Lee, who tragically died in 1973 of a cerebral aneurysm, popularized the martial arts movie genre in the United States with films like *Enter the Dragon*, which to date has grossed $150 million. Karate champion Chuck Norris, who began his film career with a string of moderately budgeted martial arts movies, now commands nearly $2 million per turn and pals around with U.S. presidents."[1] Tough guy Steven Seagal, an aikido exponent who made his screen debut in 1988, has starred in five hits — each accumulating dollar earnings in the tens of millions. Belgian-born Jean-Claude Van Damme, one of today's most popular movie heroes, also came on the scene in 1988 with a martial arts film that harvested a net sum of $19 million.

Martial arts movies have also scored big with teens and children. The first two *Karate Kid* films — dealing with a teenage boy coming of age under the guidance of his mentor, an elderly karate expert from Okinawa — each grossed over $100 million. Then, of -course, there are the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* — four pizza-eating, surf-talking, life-sized turtles — whose movies, cartoons, toys, and snacks have translated into incredible profits. Turtle merchandise alone has yielded some $500 million per year.

ENTERING THE MAINSTREAM

Over the past few decades the martial arts have emerged from relative obscurity — a practice reserved for a select few — to become a booming industry. One would be hard-pressed today to find a sizable city without at least one martial arts school. In fact, just between 1987 and 1991, the number of such schools in the United States jumped 50 percent — from a little over 4,600 to almost 7,000[2] — with each facility taking in an estimated $60,000 to $70,000 per year.[3]

Of the two to three million practitioners in the United States alone, about 40 percent are children between the ages of seven and fourteen.[4] With lessons running anywhere from $55 per month to well over $100 per hour — and the added expense of uniforms, protective gear, and equipment — it's easy to see how the industry as a whole has managed to generate an annual revenue topping the billion-dollar mark.[5]

Of course, the practice of the martial arts is not strictly confined to the *dojos* (training facilities). Military and law enforcement agencies actively incorporate martial arts techniques and armament into their regimen. Some police departments have even traded in their conventional nightsticks for *nunchakus*, a classical weapon from Okinawa consisting of two foot-long sticks attached by a short cord or chain,[6] or L-shaped batons modeled after yet another Okinawan martial arts weapon.

It is also common for universities, colleges, and adult education classes to offer a variety of martial arts courses — ranging from practical self-defense methods to more spiritually oriented styles such as t'ai-chi ch'uan and aikido. Even local YMCAs typically have one or more instructors teaching karate or judo, as do many health clubs.

In view of this pervasive cultural penetration, it is not surprising that many Christians are being influenced in varying degrees by the martial arts. What *is* surprising, however, is the reported percentage of martial artists claiming *to be* Christians. Scot Conway, founder of the Christian Martial Arts Foundation, estimates that in the United States between 50 and 70 percent of all martial artists — and roughly 20 percent of all instructors — consider themselves Christians.[7] (Note that these percentages reflect those who call themselves Christians, regardless of whether or not they are evangelicals.)

The martial arts are a topic of much confusion and misunderstanding today, especially within the evangelical community. Views range from those who claim the Asian martial arts are wholly incompatible with Christianity to those who say the two naturally blend.

Is the "Dragon" (Satan) finding a new entrance into our society and even the church through the popularity of the martial arts? Before arriving at a balanced conclusion on the matter, the vast differences separating the various arts must be considered, At the very least, a fundamental understanding of their historical roots, traditions, philosophies, and goals is necessary. In this first of two installments, we will lay a foundation by examining these issues as related to the martial arts in China. Japan, Korea, and Southeast Asia.

CHINA: THE WELLSPRING

With its rich heritage, China is considered by many to be the predominant source of ideas and practices that have shaped the martial arts.[8] Unfortunately, the history of Chinese martial arts is inundated with legend and lore.

Some ascribe the confusion to the negative attitude toward the martial arts held by those formerly in control in China. According to an article in the *Journal of Asian Martial Arts*, "the literate Chinese elite traditionally took a jaundiced view of physical combat and were inclined to ignore the arts."

Indeed, martial artists were, almost by definition, members of the illiterate lower classes and unable to leave written records of their own history. And, in the eyes of the elite record keepers, martial artists were not merely social inferiors — because of their frequent association with the underworld and seditious activities, they were often regarded as criminals."[9]

This does not appear to have *always* been the case, however. The earliest traces of the Chinese martial arts date back to the time of the Chou Dynasty (the royal lineage that ruled China from about 1122 to 255 B.C.) with descriptions of noblemen engaging in boxing, wrestling, fencing, archery, and horsemanship.[10] Archery, for one, became an integral part of the social conventions that helped insure harmony in the existing culture.

During the Warring States period (403-221 B.C.), however, the socially accepted "games" of war (scheduled battles that functioned as rituals) among the nobility of different states turned hostile, brutal, and bloody. With the decline of Chou rule, lords of separate states vied for supremacy — contracting farmers, merchants, artisans, and peasants as foot soldiers. Many of these were skilled in various arts of combat.

During this same general period, various philosophical and religious schools came into prominence that began to exert a significant influence over the developing arts of fighting. Inasmuch as a balanced Christian perspective on the martial arts depends on an awareness of these philosophical and religious schools, it is necessary that we briefly turn our attention to them before resuming our discussion of the martial arts.

Philosophical and Religious Influences on the Chinese Martial Arts

Taoism. The word "Taoism" refers to a Chinese philosophy based on the teachings of Lao Tzu (c. 6th-4th century B.C.) and Chuang Tzu (c. 399-295 B.C.). The central theme of Taoisrn has to do with harmony with the "natural flow" of the universe. Letting nature take its course is believed to be the key to happiness and fulfillment. Taoists therefore say that life should be approached with the goal of "taking no action that is contrary to Nature."[11]

To Taoists, nature is synonymous with the Tao — which makes up the entire universe; it is elusive, hidden, mysterious.[12] The Tao, in turn, is divided into two forces called *yin* and *yang. Yin* and *yang* represent the negative and positive aspects of the universe, each flowing into one another in a continuous cycle of change. "Yin is characterized as the negative force of darkness, coldness, and emptiness. Yang stands for the positive energy that produces light, warmth, and fullness. These alternating forces are indestructible and inexhaustible. They contradict as well as complement each other."[13]

Taoist philosophy sees the universe as a *balance* between these two inseparable, opposing forces. All manifestations of the Tao, and all changes in nature, are believed to be generated by the dynamic interplay of these two polar forces.

Now, *blending* with the course of nature, or *becoming one* with the Tao, is a common goal for a number of martial artists. Attaining this is said to require something far different than mere intellectual apprehension: "The adept becomes one with the Tao by realizing within himself its unity, simplicity, and emptiness."[14] Both the *Lao Tzu* and *Chuang Tzu*, the oldest primary works of Taoism, set forth the notion that meditation, along with breathing exercises, greatly aids those attempting to become one with the Tao.[15]

With its emphasis on the natural, Taoism places a high premium on intuition and spontaneity, claiming that "the highest skills operate on an almost unconscious level."[16] Such intuition and spontaneity are of obvious value to the martial artist.

Religious Taoism. Various Chinese shamans and magicians incorporated into their own existing belief systems the ideas of Taoism, producing what came to be known as religious Taoism. The primary objective of religious Taoists was the attainment of physical immortality. Meditation, along with various magical practices, physical exercises, breathing exercises, and sexual practices, was considered the means of retaining vigor and achieving everlasting life.[17]

The practice of breath control (called *chi kung),* in particular, figured prominently not only in the quest for immortality but for control of the universe. As a backdrop, *chi* (sometimes written as *qi* or *ki*) was believed to be a mystical energy, a "substance surrounding and including all things, which brought even distant points into direct physical contact." Indeed, since one single substance joined all corners of the cosmos into a single organic unity, it followed that mastery of *qi* was equivalent to mastery of the universe."[18]

Religious Taoists believed that breath control is the means of tapping into and controlling the *chi* force:

The Taoist believed that, through his own supremely concentrated breath control, he could inhale the *Chi* of the universe into his body and fuse it with his own self-energized *Chi.* This combination could only result in a healthful extension of life. This practice demands extraordinary patience and consistently deep meditation. The practitioner, after clearing his mind of extraneous thoughts in *a* kind of "fast of the mind," must focus only on the constant feeling and sound of the inhalation and exhalation of his respiration. This experience will enable one, in time, to circulate and direct the power of *Chi* into any part of the body.[19]

Since *chi* is (allegedly) a force or power that can be tapped into by the martial artist, and since breath control is the *means* of tapping into *chi*, the connection between breath control and (for example) breaking boards with a single blow of the hand becomes obvious. It is believed that tapping into *chi* via breath control enables the martial artist to perform acts requiring great strength and power.

Bodhidharma and Zen Buddhism. Attaining strength and power was also of interest to Bodhidharma (c. A.D. 5th-6th century), an Indian monk who is said to be the originator of the Shaolin boxing tradition and the father of the martial arts.[20] Believed to have been a member of the warriors/rulers caste of India, Bodhidharma brought with him a brand of Buddhism known as *Zen*, which advocated mental control and meditation as means to enlightenment.

As the story goes, Bodhidharma — disturbed by the Shaolin monks' inability to remain awake during meditation — devised a set of calisthenic exercises that later formed the basis for their unique style of boxing. "Bodhidharma explained to the monks that body and soul are inseparable. This unity must be invigorated for enlightenment." Hence, "physical fitness became a part of Shaolin life with his introduction of systematized exercises to strengthen the body and mind. Not only was health perfected, but self-defense movements were devised later from

Bodhidharma's knowledge of Indian fighting systems. These early calisthenics (in-place exercises only) marked the beginning of Shaolin Temple boxing."[21]

To sum up, then, Taoism (with its emphasis on blending with the course of nature), religious Taoism (with its emphasis on using breath control and meditation to tap into and control *chi*), and Bodhidharma's Zen Buddhism (with its emphasis on mental control, meditation, and physical discipline) serve as the philosophical religious foundation for the various martial arts. This will be illustrated in what follows.

The Chinese Fighting Arts: Kung Fu

Collectively, the Chinese fighting systems are commonly called kung fu, meaning "ability" — a generic term used for exercise that is well performed. Kung fu is typically divided into two main categories — *external/hard* and *internal/soft* systems.

The "external" or "hard" martial arts stress powerful foot and hand strikes, along with a regimen of intense hand and body conditioning.[22] While the external system advocates some use of breath control, the emphasis lies more on generating quick movements, utilizing force in straight, linear motions, and responding to force with force.[23]

By contrast, the "internal" or "soft" martial arts focus on inner spiritual development, balance, form, and mental awareness. Besides emphasizing the importance of Taoist and Buddhist philosophical principles, stress is also placed on utilizing the *chi* force. Through breath control techniques, internal school practitioners seek to "collect, cultivate, and store" the *chi* force in the region located below the navel.[24]

Of the Chinese martial arts belonging to the internal category, the three most prominent are t'ai-chi ch'uan, hsing-i, and pa-kua. External martial arts, which comprise the majority of the Chinese fighting arts, include those from the Shaolin Temples (which later split into northern and southern styles of boxing), derivatives of the Shaolin tradition (including wing chun and hung gar), and countless other forms arising from China's military heritage. As we will see below, the Chinese martial arts had great influence far beyond China's borders.

JAPAN: THE MILITARY TRADITION

The ninth century A.D. marked a turning point in Japanese history with the emergence of the professional warrior (called *bushi*) and the subsequent rise of the military class to power. This period witnessed the decline of the (once-powerful) reigning Fujiwara family (or clan), which subsequently had to enlist the aid of certain other families/clans to enforce established laws and regulations. The Taira and Minamoto families, in particular, became so successful that they ended up ruling the land as military powerhouses. By the next century, "the military profession was fully established as a hereditary privilege,"[25] a mark of distinction.

A man by the name of Minamoto Yoritomo (A.D. 1147-1199) became the first permanent *shogun* (supreme military ruler) of feudal Japan when he overturned the dominant Taira clan. The military government he established was known as the Kamakura (1185-1333), named after the region where he stationed his seat of power. During the Kamakura period the professional warriors of Japan refined their "arts of warfare," most of which were derived from China and the Asian continent.[26]

Japan's "Arts of Warfare"

The classical Japanese "arts of warfare" (called *bugei*) came to include swordsmanship, archery, and various forms of combat that utilize the halberd (a spear-like weapon), the staff, the stick, and no weapon at all.[27] There are many martial arts we could examine in this category. We will limit our attention, however, to the two most popular today — jujutsu and ninjutsu.

Jujutsu. Jujutsu ("the art of flexibility") was a term coined to refer to various systems of fighting that use minimal or no weapons. It can be defined as "various armed or unarmed fighting systems that can be applied against armed or unarmed enemies."[28]

Jujutsu has always been a "no-holds-barred" type of fighting. It properly includes methods of "kicking, striking, kneeing, throwing, choking, joint-locking, use of certain weapons, as well as holding and tying an enemy."[29] It is indeed a "flexible" art.

Ninjutsu. Ninjutsu ("the art of stealth") is said to have originated between AD. 593 and 628 and attained wide notoriety during the Kamakura era.[30] Ninjas — practitioners of this art — were typically "warrior-mystics" in the mountainous regions of south central Japan.[31] They were contracted by Japan's professional warriors (none of whom generally practiced ninjutsu) to engage in espionage, sabotage, and disinformation.

Physical training in ninjutsu involved developing special skills in both armed and unarmed combat. Weapon training included "the use of the sword, spear or lance fighting, throwing blades, as well as fire and explosives. Unarmed self-defense methods consisted of (a) techniques for attacking the bones...(b) grappling techniques...(c) assorted complementary techniques including tumbling and breaking falls, leaping and climbing, as well as special ways of running and walking."[32] These techniques, incidentally, have fascinated millions of Americans as portrayed in a variety of Ninja movies and television shows.

Philosophical and Religious Influences. Along with their martial arts, Japan's professional warriors mastered cultural subjects such as flower arranging, tea ceremony, calligraphy, poetry, and painting[33] — strongly indicating the influence of Confucian ideals. (Confucianism — the philosophy introduced by Confucius [551-479 B.C.] emphasizing ethics and social order — is characterized by cultural refinements and an appreciation for scholarship and aesthetics.)

The ethical code to which these aristocratic warriors adhered is known as the "way of the warrior" (called *bushido*): "Bushido was never a written code, being communicated directly from leader to follower. Its early development incorporated Shinto [an indigenous Japanese religion] and Confucian ideas such as ancestor respect and filial piety. [Zen] Buddhism, with its concepts of implicit trust in fate, submissiveness to the inevitable, and stoic composure when faced with adversity, was another cultural root."[34]

Japan's "Martial Ways"

Many of today's familiar Japanese-based fighting systems fall under the classification of "martial ways" (called *budo*), forms that developed from the above-mentioned "arts of warfare" (*bugei*). The "martial ways" are largely products of the twentieth century and, according to one scholar, "are concerned with spiritual discipline through which the individual elevates himself mentally and physically in search of self-perfection."[35] The "martial ways" are less combatively oriented than the "arts of warfare." Three widely popular "martial ways" are aikido, judo, and karate-do (commonly known simply as karate). Let us briefly examine the unique features of these arts.

Aikido. Aikido ("the way of harmony with *ki* [the *chi* force]") was developed in 1942 by martial arts innovator Morihei Ueshiba. His goal with this martial art was deeply religious: "The unification of the fundamental creative principle, *ki*, permeating the universe, and the individual *ki*, inseparable from breath-power, of each person."[36]

Morihei's aikido employs a series of flowing circular movements — in conjunction with locking, holding, moving, and tumbling techniques — to turn an opponent's force against himself. Various aikido techniques are showcased in the action movies of Hollywood star Steven Seagal.

Judo. Judo ("the way of flexibility") was introduced in 1882 by educator Jigoro Kano as a sport exercise based on numerous grappling and throwing techniques. Developed from jujutsu, judo focuses on timing, speed, balance, and falling.

Kano desired that judo training be undertaken not only in the training facility but also outside it. He believed that endeavoring to master the physical aspects of Judo could contribute to the progress and development of man.[31] Judo is the first Asian martial art to become an Olympic sport (1964). This is one reason for its popularity.

Karate-Do. Karate-do ("the way of the empty hand") is a form of fighting that was secretly developed on the island of Okinawa from Chinese sources as early as the seventeenth century A.D. in response to a ban of weapons imposed by the ruling Okinawan and succeeding Japanese governments. Recognized for its devastating array of hand and foot strikes, karate is characterized by its demanding regimen of rigorous physical conditioning, concentrated breathing exercises, and repetitive rehearsals of blocking, striking, and breaking techniques (for breaking boards, bricks, and the like). Gichin Funakoshi, who introduced his brand of karate to the Japanese public in 1922, declared karate to be "a medium for character building, and the final goal of training to be the perfection of the self."[38]

The Japanese martial arts mentioned above — jujutsu, ninjutsu, aikido, judo, and karate — have thoroughly penetrated American soil. One can find schools for these arts in most major U.S. cities. One of the most explosively popular martial arts in this country, however, comes to us directly from Korea.

KOREA: THE RESILIENT KINGDOM

A number of martial arts have emerged from Korea — including tae kyon, tae kwon do, hwarang do, tang soo do, hapkido, and kuk sool. Below we will focus attention primarily on tae kwon do, incontestably the most popular of the Korean martial arts.

The Historical Backdrop of the Korean Martial Arts

History reveals that the oldest surviving Korean style, tae kyon ("push shoulder"), originated in northern China before extending to Korea. According to a 1993 article in the *Journal of Asian Martial Arts*, "Probably within the past two thousand years, *subak* [the older version of tae kyon] spread into Korea and found rapid acceptance first in the military and then in the populace."[39] Chinese influence was also evident in that young Korean soldiers were educated in Confucian philosophy, Zen Buddhist ethics, archery, and weaponry.

In 1910 Japan occupied Korea, and the Korean arts were promptly banned in an effort to suppress Korean nationalism. Three tae kyon schools persevered, however, until Korea's liberation in 1945.[40] Tae kyon was then publicly reintroduced at a South Korean police martial arts competition in 1958.

Tae Kwon Do: The National Sport of Korea

During the years of Korea's suppression, General Choi Hong Hi claims to have learned tae kyon from a famous Korean calligrapher. He later studied karate in Kyoto, Japan. After the 1945 liberation of Korea, General Choi introduced tae kwon do — which he himself created — to the newly established South Korean army. He considers his style to be a *hybrid* of tae kyon and karate.[41] Sometimes, it is even called Korean karate.

Tae kwon do now has an international membership of over 20 million in 140 countries. In 1955 it became the national martial art of South Korea. In fact, "just as baseball can be said to be the national pastime of the U.S.A., so Taekwondo is the national pastime of South Korea."[42]

Though tae kwon do and tae kyon both emphasize high kicks and leg sweeps, there are notable differences between the two arts. Tae kwon do, for example, is more competitive and strenuous than tae kyon. Moreover, unlike tae kyon, tae kwon do does not emphasize the use of *ki* (or *chi*), adopts traditional Japanese garb, emphasizes linear movements, and responds to force with force.

As much as 80 percent of tae kwon do involves kicking.[43] Tae kwon do also uses breaking techniques that are applied to wood, tiles, and bricks as tests for proficiency. This art is known in the West primarily as a physical sport. In Korea, however, it is a way of life generating an attitude of self-discipline and "an ideal of noble moral rearmament."[44]

There is a religious side to tae kwon do, even in the West. Jhoon Rhee, who is often considered to be the father of American tae kwon do (and who claims to be Christian but believes in religious pluralism and denies the deity of Christ), says that instructors have a constitutional right to teach their respective religious beliefs in their studios.[45] Moreover, Tae Yun Kim — the first Korean woman Grandmaster of tae kwon do — teaches her followers in northern California to foster a deep relationship with the Silent Master, who is "the power of true self," contacted through meditation and visualization.[46]

Dr. Daeshik Kim, a physical education professor at the University of Austin (Texas), believes that tae kwon do, which has strong historical ties with Zen Buddhism, will help harmonize the philosophies of Zen and Christianity in the West:

Zen is coming to the Christian West and many are seeing conflict and contradiction. But how much is really there? Surely truth cannot be in conflict with truth. This meeting may serve to shake some of the acquired dross and ritual from both paths, prompting a reassessment and return to the basic importance of spiritual harmony in life. The

spread of martial arts into the West has already prompted self-questioning in many Westerners who have been introduced to it and sensed the deeper undercurrents.[47]

In recent years, the popularity of the Korean arts has skyrocketed, comprising approximately 30 percent of all martial arts practiced in the United States.[48] These arts have increased as a result of good business sense, their special appeal to women and children, and the recognition of tae kwon do as an Olympic sport in 1988.

SOUTHEAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC: CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Besides China, Japan, and Korea, Southeast Asia and the Pacific have also witnessed the emergence of a number of martial arts — including muay thai kickboxing from Thailand and kali from the Philippines. Let us briefly consider some of the unique features of these representative arts.

Muay Thai Kickboxing. One of the fastest-growing martial arts today comes from Thailand. Called muay thai kickboxing, this distinctive fighting form is purported to have originated in 1560 when King Naresuen of Siam (Thailand's former name) was captured by the Burmese and given a chance for liberty if he could defeat the Burmese champions."[49] As the story goes, King Naresuen was victorious, and from then on kickboxing was a national sport for Thailand.

Researchers believe the art is much older than the commonly accepted date of 1560, however. They say the art was probably influenced by Chinese boxing and the fighting arts of India (armed and unarmed techniques, some of which date as far back as 1500 B.C.).

The height of muay thai kickboxing occurred about two hundred years ago during the reign of Pra Chao Sua (King Tiger). Buddhist monks were the primary instructors.[50]

The rules then were very few, with no weight divisions or timed rounds of competition. With the exception of "grappling, pulling hair, biting, the use of fingers, and kicking a downed opponent,"[51] all else was permitted. At times, contenders would fight with broken glass stuck on their hands (their hands had been wrapped in cotton, horsehide, or hemp and then dipped in resin or some other sticky substance).

Following World War II, regulations were added to make the sport less brutal. Components of Western boxing have also been incorporated into the existing system. With its intense training regimen, muay thai kickboxing is one of the most physically demanding sports today.

Kali. The Philippine martial art of Kali (meaning "sword") features the use of knives and sticks along with empty-hand techniques. Historically (from the ninth century AD.), kali was taught on three different levels: physical, mental, and spiritual. The *physical* level involved training both with and without weapons. *Mental* training was directed to an understanding of "the body, man's psychological makeup, and the role of cosmic forces." On the *spiritual* level, "the kali practitioner sought to become one with Batha1a," believed to be God, creator, and chief deity.[52]

There is a dimension to kali devoted to the development of internal power, which employs — among other means — meditation, deep breathing exercises, chanting, mantras, prayer, and mystical visualization. Yet, as one scholar notes, "while the metaphysical and spiritual bases of the arts exist, few practitioners are either aware of or stress this dimension in their teachings.''[53]

Kali's continued existence as a martial art presents us with an intriguing story. Under the edict of Spanish rule kali was banned from practice in the Philippines in 1637. In this same year, however, Spanish friars introduced a socioreligious play in the Philippines — featuring Filipino actors — which "dramatized the religious victory of the Spaniards over the natives....The mock combat portrayed in these plays served to secretly preserve the martial movements and techniques."[54] The Spaniards had no idea that kali was being preserved right under their noses by the Filipinos on stage.

The staged mock combat also led to modifications of kali which later became known as *arnis* ("harness") and *escrima* ("fencing"). Arnis pertains to fighting systems based on the use of either one or two hardwood sticks. Eskrima refers to systems based on using sword and dagger.

In arnis, the practitioner is trained to concentrate his gaze on his opponent's forehead. A stare is developed which seems to penetrate through the opponent and creates an attitude of dominance over him. The expert is trained to stare for extended periods without winking." After all, "a wink in combat might prove fatal."[55]

It is interesting to note that, at least initially, there was much secrecy involved in learning arnis. "Training sessions were announced only to the initiated and carried out secretly in remote places. Students were sworn, under threat of death, never to reveal their knowledge."[56]

In 1900, under American rule, the Filipino martial arts returned to public prominence and were used against the invading Japanese forces during World War II.[57] The growing popularity of arnis can be seen in its establishment as a formal course by the physical education department of the Far Eastern University in Manila.[58]

EVER-DEVELOPING ARTS

Though each of the martial arts from China, Japan, Korea, and Southeast Asia has distinctive qualities, it is important to realize — as an overarching principle — that the martial arts are *dynamic*; changes and development never seem to cease. There are traditionalists who try to maintain the heart and soul of their systems, but nevertheless they are willing to make modifications to meet the needs and demands of a changing society. It is highly unlikely that any but the most recent of today's fighting styles have retained every original facet devised by its originator. Chances are the "originator" himself took an already existing system and altered it for improvement.

The United States provides many examples of this dynamic element. We can point, for example, to the Americanized version of kickboxing, whose champion — Benny "the Jet" Urquidiz — is a born-again Christian. There is also the kajukenbo system devised by Adriano "Sonny" Emperado in Hawaii in 1947, which is essentially a collation of karate, judo, jujutsu, kenpo, and Chinese boxing.[59]

Bruce Lee and Jeet Kune Do

Perhaps of all contemporary innovators, none have received more attention than the late Bruce Lee, who formulated jeet kune do ("way of the intercepting fist"). Jeet kune do is more properly an *approach* to the martial arts than a distinct style all its own.

The strong Taoist undercurrent running through Lee's philosophy is clearly evident in his iconoclastic views of the traditional systems, which he felt imprisoned practitioners. "I hope to free my comrades from bondage to styles, patterns, and doctrines," he said in a 1971 interview with *Black Belt* magazine.[60]

In Lee's opinion, every person is different. Hence, rather than forcing an individual to conform to a style that does not "fit him," a style should be developed that suits the uniqueness of the individual. "As a result, Jeet Kune Do utilizes all ways and is bound by none," wrote Lee, and, likewise, uses any techniques or means which serve its end."[61]

Though on the one hand very practical-oriented, Lee's jeet kune do contains a side that is deeply philosophical and mystical: "The art of Jeet Kune Do is simply to simplify. It is being oneself; it is reality in its 'isness.' Thus, isness is the meaning — having freedom in its primary sense, not limited by attachments, confinements, partialization, complexities....Jeet Kune Do is enlightenment. It is a way of life, a movement toward will power and control, though it ought to be enlightened by intuition."[62]

ASSESSING THE ARTS

What can we conclude from the brief survey above? For one thing, the martial arts are here to stay. They have become, in many ways, a part of the American mainstream.

Beyond this, we must recognize that the martial arts are as rich and diverse as the Asian culture from which they emerged. Their roots and traditions derive from a variety of sources, from fierce warriors and aristocrats of the past — to exceptionally skilled commoners in the arts of fighting — to Taoist and Buddhist monks in search of harmony and enlightenment.

As well, we have seen that the goals and focus of the assorted arts range from the purely pragmatic (e.g., physical fitness and self-defense) to the deeply religious and philosophical (which can lead to the esoteric and the occult). Moreover, the arts themselves continue even now to shift and adapt, as they always have, with a changing society.

For the Christian there are questions that remain to be answered: Is it right for Christians to defend themselves via the martial arts when the Bible says to "turn the other cheek"? Is it right for Christians to participate in what many consider to be a violent activity? Even if one answers *yes* to these questions, is it possible for a Christian to completely divorce the Eastern religious philosophy and mysticism that often accompanies the martial arts from the distinctive physical discipline?

Now that we have taken a quick survey of the arts themselves, we are in a better position to consider these and other questions that confront the Christian about the martial arts. That is precisely what we will do in the second and final installment of this two-part series.

NOTES

[1] John Corcoran, *The Martial Arts Companion: Culture, History, and Enlightenment* (New York: Mallard Press, 1992), 80.
[2] Glenn Rifkin, "The Black Belts of the Screen Are Filling the Dojos," *The New York Times*, 16 February 1992,10.
[3] Personal interview with Marian Castinado, executive editor of *M.A. Training* magazine (circ. 40,000), and associate editor of *Black Belt* magazine (circ. l00,000), 12 July 1993.
[4] *Ibid*,; and Rifkin, Fl0.
[5] Personal interview with Nicholas Cokinos, chairman of the Educational Funding Company (which handles the finances of over 700 martial arts schools), 14 July 1993.
[6] *See* "Nunchako? No, Thank You — That's What Angry Demonstrators Are Saying to a Painful New Twist in Police Hardware," *People Weekly*, 28 May 1990, 105-6.
[7] Personal interview with Scot Conway, Christian Martial Arts Foundation, 14 July 1993.
[8] Michael Maliszewaki, "Meditative-Religious Traditions of Fighting Arts and Ways," *Journal of Asian Martial Arts*, July 1992, 11. Scholars point to India as the other leading source.
[9] Charles Holcombe, "Theater of Combat: A Critical Look at the Chinese Martial Arts." *Journal of Asian Martial Arts*, October 1992, 65-66.
[10] Donn F. Draeger and Robert W. Smith, *Comprehensive Asian Fighting Arts* (Tokyo: Kodamha International, 1980), 15; cf. David Chow and Richard Spangler, *Kung Fu: History, Philosophy and Technique* (Hollywood: Unique Publications Company, 1980), 2.
[11] Wing-Tsit Chan, translator and compiler, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1963), 136.
[12] *Tao-te Ching*, 1, 4, 14, 21; cf. Herlee G. Creel, *Chinese Thought from Confucius to Mao Tse-Tung* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1953), 101-2.
[13] Chow and Spangler, 16-17; cf. *Tao-te Ching*, 42; Chan, 262-63; Creel. 172-73.
[14] Stephen Schumacher and Gert Woerner, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Eastern Philosophy and Religion* (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1989), 356.
[15] *See*, for example, Draeger and Smith, 16, 31-33.
[16] Creel, 106.
[17] Schumacher and Woerner, 358.
[18] Charles Holcombe, "The Daoist Origins of the Chinese Martial Arts," *Journal of Asian Martial Arts*, January 1993, 13. *Chi* is understood to be the energy and matter produced by the interaction between yin and yang (*see* John P. Painter, "Will the Real Yin and Yang Please Stand Up?" *Inside Kung-Fu*, December 1991, 39-42; cf. Chan, 784).
[19] Chow and Spangler, 24-25.
[20] *Ibid*., 7-13. A number of scholars question the veracity of this claim, asserting that "combative arts of a shaolin nature existed long before Ta Mo [Bodhidharma] came to China" (P'ng Chye Khim and Donn F Draeger, *Shaolin: An lntroduction to Lohan Fighting Techniques* [Rutland, VT: Charles E. Tutt;e Company, 1979,]15); cf. Holcombe, "Theater of Combat," 68; and Michael F. Speisbach, "Bodhidharma: Meditating Monk, Martial Arts Master or Make-Believe?" *Journal of Asian Martial Art*, October 1992, 10-26.
[21] Chow and Spangler, 11
[22] Maliszewski, 15.
[23] *Ibid.*
[24] *Ibid.* The distinctions drawn between the "external/hard" and "internal/soft" can be misleading, for elements of one sometimes find their way into the other: cf. Draeger and Smith, 17-18.

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[25] Donn F. Draeger, *Classical Bujutsu* (New York: Weatherhill, 1990), 25.
[26] Draeger and Smith, 83.
[27] *See* Draeger, *Classical Bujutsu*, *idem. Modern Bujutsu and Budo* (New York: Weatherhill, 1974); and Oscar Ratti and Adele Westbrook, *Secrets of the Samurai: A Survey of the Martial Arts of Feudal Japan* (Rutland, VT: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1979).
[28] Draeger and Smith, 133.
[29] *Ibid.*
[30] Maliszewski, 25.
[31] *Ibid.* For an example of ninjutsu mysticism, *see* Stephen K, Hayes, *Ninja, Volume Two: Warrior Ways of Enlightenment* (Burbank, CA: Ohara Publications, 1981), 143-59.
[32] Maliszewski.
[33] Draegor and Smith, 84.
[34] *Ibid*., 85. On Folk Shinto, *see* Hori Ichiro, *Japanese Religion: A Survey by the Agency for Cultural Affairs* [Tokyo: Kodansha International Limited, 1981], 29-45, 121-43).
[35] Draeger and Smith, 91.
[36] Kisshomaru Ueshiba, *The Spirit of Aikido*, trans. Taitetsu Unno (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1987), 15. *See* also Draeger, *Modern Bujutsu and Budo*, 137-62.
[37] Draeger, *Modern Bujutsu and Budo*, 118-19
[38] *Ibid*., 131; cf. Carrie Wingate, "Exploring Our Roots: Historical and Cultural Foundations of the Ideology of Karate-do," *Journal of Asian Martial Arts*, 2, 3 (1993): 10-35.
[39] Robert Young, "The History and Development of Tae Kyon." *Journal of Asian Martial Arts* 2, 2 ([993): 46.
[40] Young, 54.
[41] Choi Hong Hi, *Taikwon-Do: The Art of Self-Defense* (Seoul, Korea: Daeha Publication Company, 1968), front jacket sleeve.
[42] David Mitchell, *The Overlook Martial Arts Handbook* (Woodstock, NY: The Overlook Press, 1988), 160.
[43] Scott Shuger, "The Fine Art of Kicking," *Women's Sports and Fitness*, January 1986, 17.
[44] Choi Hong Hi, 14.
[45] James William Holzer, "Martial Arts in the Name of God?" *Inside Kung Fu*, March 1987, 72.
[46] Cassia Herman, "Tae Yun Kim: Grandmaster Martial Artist," *Body Mind and Spirit*, Summer 1991, 54-58.
[47] Daeshik Kim, *Tae Kwon Do: Volume 2* (Seoul, Korea: NANAM Publications, 1991), 138.
[48] Castinado, personal interview.
[49] Draeger and Smith, 162.
[50] *Ibid.*
[51] *Ibid.*
[52] Maszilewski, 31.
[53] *Ibid*, 32.
[54] *Ibid*, 30.
[55] Draeger and Smith, 189.
[56] *Ibid.*
[57] Maliszewski, 30; cf. Dan Inosanto, *The Filipino Martial Arts* (Los Angeles: Know Now Publishing Company, 1980), 12-13.
[58] Draeger and Smith, 190.
[59] *See* William K. Beaver, "Kajukenbo: The Perfected Art of Dirty Streetfighting." *Karate/Kung-fu Illustrated*, February 1992, 16-21.
[60] Quoted in Dan Inosanto, *Jeet Kune Do: The Art and Philosophy of Bruce Lee* (Los Angeles: Know Now Publishing Company, 1980), 10.
[61] Bruce Lee, *Tao of Jeet Kune Do* (Burbank. CA: Ohara Publications, 1975), 12.
[62] *Ibid.*