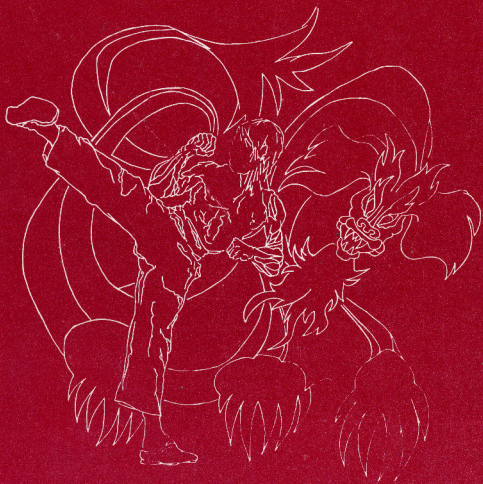


# **BRUCE LEE**



**BY JESSE GLOVER HIS FIRST STUDENT  
AND ASSISTANT INSTRUCTOR.**

# Bruce Lee Between Wing Chun and Jeet Kune Do

**By His first student and assistant instructor Jesse R. Glover**

*This book is dedicated to the man who taught me how to think, Mr. William H. Lee. Thanks for showing me the way.*  
Jesse

Special thanks to Karen for all of her help,  
and to Sherri for doing the editing.

At six o'clock there was a knock on the door, and when I opened it there stood Bruce Lee ready to give me private instructions. This was my introduction into Gung Fu.

Jesse R. Glover  
Aug., 1959, Seattle, WA.

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## Introduction

My history in martial arts began in Seattle, Washington. I had rheumatic fever as a child and was weak and sickly. My physical illness and the dictates of an overly concerned mother robbed me of the simple pleasure of getting into childhood fights. These two pressing concerns, my mother and my condition, directed my interest toward adult forms of combat, and I became an avid follower of boxing and wrestling. I listened to boxing on the radio, watched wrestling on T.V. and spent hundreds of hours reading all the material that I could find on the two subjects.

All of the books that I read on boxing and wrestling stressed the need for better than average physical strength. Since I recognized my own limitations I was about to give up on learning self defense and became a fast talker when a friend of mine, Larry Wing introduced me to the art of Jiu Jitsu. Larry told me that Jiu Jitsu used principles of leverage that enabled a small weak person to defend themselves against someone larger and stronger.

I scurried down to the Seattle Public Library, checked out all of the books that they had on Jiu Jitsu, and studied each one until I had all of the moves and the concepts committed to memory. Larry and I spent several hours testing the techniques of each other but neither of us had a functional idea of how leverage was supposed to work.

The only available mats to practice on were located in the downtown Y.M.C.A. One day when Larry and I were at the Y practicing some of the moves that we had taken from the library books, a short stocky blackbelt came in. He watched us go through our moves for a while and told us that the things that we were doing wouldn't work. He offered to teach us to fall, but was reluctant to show us anything else. He taught us how to fall by throwing us with the crab throw. The crab throw is done with a leg scissor movement against the legs and the chest. It is a very difficult throw to fall from, and it is certainly not the type of throw that is used to teach basic falling skills to beginners.

I was into the Japanese idea that a person isn't suppose to show pain and I went home on more than one occasion with bad bruises and severe headaches. I spent the hour long practice sessions bouncing off of mats that were thin and in need of repair. Years later at my first formal Judo school I learned that the reason for my headaches and bruises was due to the blackbelt's failure to teach me the proper way to fall. I wasn't told to keep my chin tucked to my chest, and every time I was thrown my head would bounce off the mat. I was so eager in those days to learn anything about martial arts that I willingly endured the pain. The blackbelt came around for a month, and the only thing that I learned during that time was that it hurts like hell to get thrown on poor matting.

After the blackbelt stopped coming around Larry and I sent away for some cheap paperbacks on Jiu Jitsu. The books were poorly written and the instructions were difficult to follow, but we did come up with a few workable moves. Most of which were arm, wrist and leg locks. They worked quite well once they were secured, but applying them was very difficult. One day Larry moved away, and my rudimentary practice of martial arts came to an end until a few months later when I built a falling platform in my basement. The platform was made from boards padded with rags and covered with old

bed spreads. I spent hundreds of hours practicing the breakfall movements that I had learned at the Y until I was able to execute them with skill. I traded a hunting knife, and some books for a Judo gi top and a white belt, which added a touch of realism to my workouts. Sometimes, instead of just falling I would pretend that I was being thrown by an opponent.

One day when I was playing at Collins Playfield, a kid told me that they taught Judo at the place across the street. I wasn't quite sure what Judo was, but I knew that it had something to do with Jiu Jitsu. From that day forward I spent a lot of time playing across the street from the Judo place, and whenever they left the doors open and I would venture inside and watch the activities. Most of the time I stood there watching for a long time before someone would ask me what I wanted. I was uncertain of my position and I would turn and walk away rather than ask if I could stay and watch. Sometimes I saw someone I knew, and if they spoke to me it always seemed like I got to stay longer.

I asked one of the Japanese kids that I knew if it would be possible for me to practice Judo at Seattle Dojo, and he told me that only Japanese people were allowed to practice there. I was really saddened by this news and tried to get some of the kids who practiced there to teach me. I got the same treatment from them that I had received from the blackbelt at the Y. They were more than happy to bend my fingers and throw me to the ground, but they wouldn't teach me any offensive moves. I finally grew tired of the treatment that I was getting from these kids, and looked up a Jiu Jitsu school in the telephone book.

The school was owned and operated by a Sgt. Jorgenson who was a member of the Seattle Police Department. When I spoke to him about the cost of instruction he said that the price was quite high. I knew that there wasn't anyway that I could raise the money, and I asked him if there was some kind of work that I could do in place of payment. He said that he was sorry, but that he was in business and that the only payment that he could accept was money. He did however take the time to show me some moves that I could practice on my own. After spending an hour showing me the basics of his art he gave me a small booklet on his method and sent me on my way. It was kind of him to show me the basic moves, and I left him feeling that for the first time I had something concrete to practice. Sgt. Jorgenson's method was based on a lot of chopping movements, and I spent the next two years chopping the air as I fought a host of imaginary opponents.

When I was twelve years old I had a brutal experience that really provided the motivation to learn martial arts. Ronney Fields, Sylvester Bennett, and I were on our way back to town from a dance at the Duwamish Bend housing project when we encountered a drunken Seattle Patrolman. We had just turned the corner from first avenue and were heading up Jackson street when we first spotted him. The patrolman was two blocks away, but it was plain to see that he was very drunk. He was reeling from one side of the side walk to the other and it looked as if each step that he took was going to be his last. Suddenly we all got scared because we didn't now what to expect. We were a block away from the patrolman when he first noticed us, and he immediately started screaming obscenities and waving his night stick. Any thoughts that we had of trying to walk by him left us, and we ran. We turned down an alley between first avenue and

occidental with the patrolman in hot pursuit. We were nearing the end of the alley when a prowler car passed by. I could hear the tires squeal as the driver slammed on the brakes and I figured that they had spotted our silhouette. Ron and Sylvester leaped into a couple of window wells and were hidden from view. The only place that I could find to hide in was a door way that had been sealed shut with bricks. The tires of the prowler car screamed as it shifted into reverse and headed back toward the alley entrance. The door well was no more than a six or eight inch indentation and I had a clear view of both the patrolman and the prowler car as they entered the alley.

The piercing headlights of the prowler car illuminated the narrow alley and I could clearly see the patrolman as he half ran and half staggard forward. He was now shouting "come on out you little black bastards or I'll kill you. Since I knew that he could already see me I stepped out and stood there fearfully waiting for the unknown to happen. When the patrolman finally reached me he asked me where the rest of the little niggers were, and I told him that I was by myself. He screaming that he would kill the others if they didn't come out, and Sylvester and Ron stepped from their hiding places about the same time that the two men in the prowler car stepped out into the alley. I was standing about ten feet from Sylvester, Ron and the drunken patrolman when it started.

All of a sudden the patrolman kned Ron in the groin, and began to kick him. Ron hopped around in a bent over position trying to protect his body from further harm. I turned away from one of the cops from the prowler car, and yelled, "whats going on?" The cop spun me back around by the shoulders and told me to mind my own business. I was too scared to pay any attention to his command and turned around just in time to see Sylvester get hit flush in the mouth with a Sunday right. The patrolman was wearing a big square ring and it caught the corner of Sylvester's mouth and tore it wide open. The cop that I had been talking to swung me around and told me to pay attention to his questions. I was in the process of telling him my address when I felt a rough jerk on my shoulder. I turned around to see what was happening and caught the full force of the drunken patrolman's nightstick across my lower jaw. The shock from the blow was so intense that I stood there unable to move. I felt as though I were in an unreal dream, but my mind was still able to function, and I knew that I somehow had to stay on my feet.

Suddenly the three cops were talking among themselves about what they were going to do with us. They asked Ron where he lived and he told them that he lived on eighteenth and King. Finally one of them said let's take them out and dump them. We were less than three blocks from the waterfront and I thought that they might dump us into Puget Sound. I didn't know how to swim and I really started to struggle when they shoved us into the back seat of the prowler car. I knew that if they threw us into the sound that I was as good as dead. Finally, they got me under control and shoved me into the backseat with Sylvester and Ron. My mind was racing with thoughts of escape and I was all set to run as fast as I could when they opened the door to take us out.

The prowler car went down the alley and turned to the left up Jackson street. I was breathing a little easier, but I was still fearful of what they might have in store for us. The prowler car stopped at eighteenth and

Jackson and they told us to get out. We limped over to Ron's house and knocked on the door. When Ron's mother came to the door she found Ron bent over holding his groin. Sylvester holding the corner of his mouth together, and me trying to stop my mouth from bleeding. Mrs. Fields had a shocked look on her face as she quickly ushered us into the house and asked us what happened. Ron and Sylvester told her that we had been beaten up by the police. When I tried to answer her questions I found that I was unable to talk. I couldn't figure out what was wrong until I went into the bathroom and looked in the mirror.

One of my teeth was sticking through a hole an inch below my lower lip, and three others were deeply imbedded in my tongue. My mouth was full of blood and it was very difficult to breath. My first thought was that I wanted to get home where I knew my parents would make everything alright. Ron's mother called my mother and she took a cab over to Ron's. When she arrived and looked at my jaw I heard her swear for the first time in my life. I'm sure that she used ever curse word in existence when she reported what happened to the police desk sergant over the phone. I wanted to go home, but my mother said that I would have to go to the hospital. When we arrived at the hospital we were greeted by two plainclothes policemen who kept trying to get me to say that the person who had beat us up was a nightwatchman. My mother told them that I couldn't talk and that they would have to ask me questions which I could nod my head to. Finally, a doctor came in and looked at my mouth. He stuck his fingers into my mouth and pulled my teeth out of my tongue. The pain that followed was pretty bad, but I was finally able to talk. The two policemen took my statement and had me sign it. My mother was madder than hell, and all she wanted to do was to get her hands on the man who had hurt me. They wired my mouth together and I had to stay in the hospital for two or three weeks. When I left the hospital I had one burning thought, and that was to somehow kill the man who had beat me up. The experience left me with a mixture of fear and hate toward the police that I had to deal with for the next twenty years.

The way that my teeth were loosly held in my mouth made me even more cautious about fighting. The doctor told me when I left the hospital that one good blow to the mouth would necessitate the pulling of all my lower front teeth. I finally lost the teeth to an abscess when I was thirty. From the time that I was twelve until I turned twenty two I lived to get even with the man who had beat me up. I was twenty two years old when I finally ran into the drunken patrolman. I had played it over thousands of times in my mind how I was going to take him apart slowly with my hands. I had long since excluded the possibility of using weapons because I felt that it would be much too impersonal. I wanted him to feel the fear and the terror that I had felt as a twelve year old boy. The only thing that happened when I finally saw him was that I became disgusted with myself over all the time that I had wasted thinking about what I was going to do to him.

I ran into him in a downtown restaurant, and I'm sure that he didn't have the slightest notion of who I was. He was slightly less drunk than he had been that night in the alley and I sat and stared at him for a full ten minutes. With each passing minute a year of stored up hatred drained out of me, and when I finally got up and left the only anger that I felt was toward

myself for the ten years that I had spent living on the flimsy foundation of hate. As I pushed open the door to leave I glanced at the man and I knew that to waste him would be to waste myself. The one positive thing that came out of the experience was the knowledge that I'll never let myself be physically abused again.

When I was fifteen, I moved to California. The first thing that I did when I got there was attempt to enroll in a Judo school in San Carlos. I was living with my father in Palo Alto, and the town didn't have any martial arts schools. The nearest school that I could find in the telephone book was the school in San Carlos. I hitch hiked a ride to San Carlos three times before I got up enough nerve to walk into the school. The first two times that I went up to the school were spent looking through a crack in the curtain. The third time that I went to the school I had made up my mind to walk into the place and find out what was going on. A minute after I had stepped through the door I was approached by a man in a judo gi wearing a blackbelt. The man asked me what I wanted and I told him that I wanted to study Judo. He asked me if I was from the area and I told him that I had just moved down from Seattle. He asked me if I knew anything about Seattle Dojo and I told him that I had been there a couple of times. When he asked who was the head of the school the only thing that I could think to say was that he was an older Japanese man whose name was difficult to pronounce. Finally he said that he wasn't taking any new students at the moment but that I could check back sometime in the future. I left the school feeling depressed because I had failed again. Six months later I tried to gain entry into another school in San Jose. Several times I went to this school and each time I was ignored. It was easy to walk in and sit down, but no one would respond to my questions and it became apparent to me that I wasn't welcome there.

Later I met a police cadet who had a brownbelt in Judo. When I told him of my burning desire to learn Judo he agreed to instruct me, but we didn't have a proper place to practice. Most of the techniques that I learned involved chokes, armbars and coming in for throws without throwing. I practiced with him for two months before I moved away and lost contact.

My first opportunity to learn Judo in a formal setting came after I had joined the U.S.A.F. There were two ranked Judo people teaching on Ramstein air base in Germany. One was a sergeant with the local German police force, and the other was an airman who assisted him. The sergeant was a short, blocky man with the kind of strength that would win fights for him even if he didn't know Judo. He held the rank of second degree brownbelt. Most of what he taught was self-defense rather than sport Judo. The assistant was a six foot skinny yellowbelt who assisted the sergeant and took over for him when he was gone. The assistant was rather weak, and it was difficult for him to execute any of the major throws, but his greatest liability was that he couldn't teach. The sergeant was so strong that none of the students could throw him even when he wasn't resisting. His low center of gravity and his resistance to being thrown made it very difficult to learn. I studied under these two people until I was sent on a nine month job to France.

I had read that France was a country that was high on martial arts, but I didn't see anything to support the claim the whole time that I was there.

At the end of my assignment in France I returned to Germany to find that the sergeant was no longer around, and the assistant had been sent to another base in France. I still had a strong desire to learn, but I no longer had a teacher.

Sometime later the Air Force got the idea that Judo would be a good thing for it's men to know and they brought in a blackbelt Master sergeant named French. His assignment was to train one man from each of the squadrons on the base. I told my first Sergeant that I had a strong desire to learn martial arts, and that I would like to be considered for the training, but he said that another man had already been selected.

The man they had selected was named Trafton. He was the squadron jock, and I'm sure that his interest in Judo was directly related to the fact that he was going to be excused in the afternoons to practice while the rest of us had to work. When Trafton finished the course, he gave each member a two hour lesson and that was the last opportunity that I had to study while I was in the service.

I made a vow to myself that the first thing that I would do when I returned to the states was to join a Judo Club and become a blackbelt. The first thing that I did when I got discharged was to go to work for the Boeing Company. The second thing was to join Seattle Dojo, the place where I had stood around looking in the door as a kid. Joining Seattle Dojo was what I considered my true entry into the martial arts.

Judo salutations and falling came easy for me because of my earlier learning experiences. I was also able to escape from most of the lower belt's throwing attacks with little effort. This almost reflexive escape behavior was both a blessing and a curse. It was a blessing because it allowed me to escape from most attacks, and it was a curse because it made me reluctant to attack.

My first two years in Judo were average and I found myself losing as many matches as I won. I became a successful Judo player, after I had learned three hard lessons. The first lesson was to ignore the crowd and concentrate on the opponent, the second lesson was to disregard the rank and the reputation of the opponent and the third was to just go out and do the best that I could. My third year in Judo was a good one, and after a hard summer of practice I started to win tournaments. Between 1959 and 1965 I lost a total of eight matches and most of these were to blackbelts; while I was still a brownbelt.

In 1960 I started to lose interest in Judo and I relaxed my training regimen. I had come to the art seeking an effective form of self-defense, but it had become apparent to me that only the most skillful Judomen would have a chance in the street. Another reason for my loss of interest was the fighting that was going on to determine who was going to control the art in the U.S.

My introduction to the striking arts of Karate and Gung Fu finally led me away from the practice of Judo. I had read a couple of articles in *True and Argosy* on Gung Fu and Karate and, I was fascinated with what I had read. When Mas Oyama's book *What is Karate*, was published I was one of the first people in Seattle to purchase a copy. My meeting with Bruce Lee eventually led me even further from the art of Judo. And my last four years of success in competition were the result of my earlier rigorous practice because I trained very little in Judo after 1961. Bruce Lee had captured a large portion of my attention and I was determined to become good at Gung Fu.



## Chapter One

I had first heard about Karate while I was practicing Judo from one of my Judo teachers Mr. Harry Hamasaki. He said that there were men in Japan who could break a man's neck with a single blow of their hands but, he didn't mention the name of the art, and it wasn't until later that I learned that Karate wasn't an advanced form of Judo, but a complete art of it's own.

I first heard of the art by it's proper name in 1958 from a Judo greenbelt named Leroy Porter. Leroy helped a Korean blackbelt named Moon instruct at the downtown Y. Leroy and I often talked about martial arts, and one day he mentioned Kempo Karate. I had never heard of Kempo, or any other kind of Karate, but I was excited by his description of it. He told me that he had a book on the art and that if I wanted to read it he would bring it by my house. I urged him to bring the book as soon as possible, and he brought it by the next day. I spent the following three days reading it over.

The book cover was black, with a logo of a white circle that contained three white lotus blossoms. The author of the book was Hawaiian, and the book was published sometime during the second World War. Kempo Karate reminded me of some of the Jiu Jitsu that I had seen. The major differences between it and Jiu Jitsu was the type of kicks and the blows that were woven into the throws and locks. The text also contained one, two, and three man attacks plus a section on weapon defenses.

The next time that I saw Leroy I cornered him and got him to tell me everything that he knew about Kempo Karate. When he saw that I was really interested he told me that he had another book that I could borrow. The second book, he said, had been written by a man named James Lee and he had been one of Lee's students while living in California.

After a little prodding Leroy agreed to show me some of what he had learned from James Lee. I was so impressed with several of the movements that I had him repeat them several times. The techniques that he demonstrated were completely foreign to me, but they looked and felt deadly. After LeRoy's demonstration we talked for a long time about James Lee. Leroy told me that Lee had studied under a professor Wong in San Francisco. He said that Lee had learned a great many forms at Wong's school, but that he had become concerned about their application in a fight and had finally ventured out on his own. Leroy said that Lee didn't claim to practice or teach any style and simply called his art Jop Sil, which meant miscellaneous hands.

Lee had taken certain moves from the forms that he had learned and had made them into strong and powerful techniques by applying the concept of force. He had developed good power in all of his moves and was capable of some amazing feats. He could stack up three or four pieces of marble and tell you which one he was going to break without damaging the others. Leroy said that Lee seldom failed to break the piece that he had selected while, leaving the other pieces intact. Lee's backfist was his best weapon and with it he could easily break a three inch thick piece of wood.

Leroy said that Lee had not restricted his practice to Gung Fu and that he also had a brownbelt in Judo and some knowledge of Jiu Jitsu. Leroy said that Lee had visited most of the schools in the bay area and was confident

that the method that he practiced was as good as any that was to be found. Leroy told me that he would bring Lee's book over the next day and I spent a restless night waiting.

James Lee's book was a small paperback with a picture of him breaking something on the cover. The book's pen illustrations were crude, but they did convey a message of power and effectiveness. The text was very interesting reading, and on the back cover was a picture of a gentleman and I was later to have the good fortune to meet, Mr. Paul Pung.

My brief acquaintance with this new material changed the thrust of my martial arts from throwing to striking. I spent the next few days working out with Leroy and building some of the equipment that was shown in James Lee's book. I got a sandbag, a padded pole and a bucket of sand and started the not too wise mutilation of my hands. I practiced two hours a day on the sandbag and was eventually able to break four one inch boards with a corkscrew punch. My roommate, Ed Hart, eyed my practice with great reservation as to the wisdom of wrecking my hands on bags, boards, and pads.

Ed had been a middleweight pro-boxer and he could drop a two hundred pound man with either hand. His boxing ability left him unimpressed with my assault on inanimate objects. One day he let me test my chop on his stomach and I can remember the way that it bounced off like a rubberball on a concrete sidewalk. When he coaxed me into trying it the second time it didn't work any better than it had the first time.

I told Ed to try it on me, and he said that he would first try it with half power. I can still remember the deep pain and gasping that followed Ed's blow. It took me a full three minutes to get up from the floor and I thanked my lucky stars that he had only used half power. This experience caused me to increase the amount of practice time that I was devoting to the techniques in James Lee's book, but I doubt if I could have performed any of them in the street.

Once I became aware of the Asian striking arts, I became obsessed with the idea of learning them. An opportunity to do this presented itself in the form of a trip to California with Howard Hall and Lloyd Flannery, two of my roommates who were salesmen. My primary purpose in going to California was to look up James Lee and Paul Pung and ask them what I could learn while I was in the area.

The day after we arrived Howard and I were at Mr. Pung's door trying to gain an audience. It was graciously granted, and after we had introduced ourselves and told him why we were there he led us downstairs to his basement practice area. Mr. Pung spent the better part of the afternoon explaining and demonstrating his method of Kenpo Karate.

The first thing that he demonstrated was the way that he punched. He used a bare vertical fist, and his punching pad was a bare two by six. We were greatly impressed with the way he could strike the pad without apparent injury to his hand. Mr. Pung told us that he had learned to strike the board with full force over the years and that anyone could learn to do the same thing if they took the time to proceed slowly. He told us that he had been practicing for twenty years and showed us a card that named him as a member of the Hawaiian Kenpo Karate Association.

Two other things that stood out about Mr. Pung was his ability to move fast with power, and the lack of callous on his hands. He was a small man (he

weighted about 110 pounds) but there was an air of confidence about him that let you know he wasn't fearful of physical encounters. During the course of the afternoon Mr. Pung told us about two of his most interesting experiences. One was with a young Karateman who had come to visit him when he returned to the US. from Okinawa. He said that the young man was big, strong and quite impressed with his own skill at Karate. Mr. Pung had found the young Karateman less than impressive because he could only defend to the right side of the body and not to the left. When he asked the young man how he would defend to the left side of his body, the young man claimed that he was so strong on the right that no one would be able to get in on him. Mr. Pung had popped his bubble by repeatedly coming in past his defenses. When the young man became angry and tried to hit him, Pung had struck a nerve in the young man's arm that had resulted in a two hour paralysis. Mr. Pung told us that the man had left a lot more humble than when he had entered.

The second experience he told us about involved his work. He was a bank teller in one of the local banks, and on one occasion he had backed down a man who was intent on robbing the bank. Mr. Pung had told the would be robber that if he didn't get out of the bank that he was going to do him serious harm. The robber believed him, and turned and ran.

Mr. Pung used Chinese medicine on his hands, and he had a real fascination for the study of Asian medicine and herbs. He talked about Chinese medicine for nearly two hours before he got around to the subject of Gung Fu. He told us that we should try to learn Gung Fu if we were really interested in the striking arts. Mr. Pung began his discussion of the art by telling us about Chinese boxers who trained by staring into the sun until it destroyed the center of their eyes. He said that these Chinese boxers felt that having only peripheral vision would prevent them from fixating on their opponent's moves.

The technique of staring at the sun sounded very impressive, but I made a mental note not to try it on myself. After four hours of steady conversation, Mr. Pung told us that he had an appointment to keep. We thanked him for answering our endless questions and left. As we were leaving he said that we should try to get into one of the Gung Fu schools in San Francisco. He said that it would be very difficult to gain entry into one of these schools, but that it would be well worth the effort if we were to succeed.

We spent the next two days trying to locate a Gung Fu school. After covering Chinatown without success, we decided that it was impossible for anyone but a Chinese to find a school much less gain entry into one. Whenever we asked about the art in Chinatown we got responses like, "What's that some kind of Chinese dish?" We finally decided that our best course of action would be to go straight to Oakland and look up James Lee.

When we arrived at Lee's door we were uncertain of the kind of reception that we were going to get because of our experience in San Francisco. I explained to James Lee how we had come to know of him, and he invited us in. He began the demonstration of his art by asking me to throw a punch at him. He quickly countered the punch with a strike to my ribs that left me gasping for air. I was sure that he had broken at least two of my ribs, but I was determined to conceal my pain. He told me to punch

again, and he blocked and countered with a strike to the groin. After the second punch, I spent the next couple of minutes thinking that I was going to pass out. It was very difficult not to react to the second punch, and I found myself not caring if Lee saw that I was hurt. Years later Bruce Lee told me that James Lee had said that he wanted to impress us with the fact that he could hurt us, just in case we had something up our sleeves. Bruce also said that there was a good chance that James Lee might have been drinking.

Fortunately, the punching part of the demonstration was over and he asked us to follow him into the basement where he kept all of his training devices. He first demonstrated the power of the backfist by breaking a three inch piece of wood with one blow. He followed the wood breaking demonstration with a backfist shattering of a two inch thick piece of marble. Howard and I were both wide-eyed and amazed by his demonstration of power.

Suspended from the ceiling was a large bag that appeared to be filled with sand. Lee hit the bag hard and sent it flying. When he asked me if I wanted to hit it, I figured that I had nothing to lose and hit the bag as hard as I could. I damn near broke my hand, because what I assumed to be sand turned out to be ballbearings. James Lee chuckled at the way that I was nursing my injured hand while my mind was learning a lesson about looking before one leaps into the unknown.

We talked to Lee for three hours. He told us that he was a brownbelt in Judo and that he had gotten most of his Gung Fu training at a school in San Francisco. He said that he had grown tired of doing forms and had turned to the development of his own method, which was a composite of a number of different styles. He felt the primary reason that his system worked was because it was based on power. He showed me some pictures of a man named Al Novak who he said was his top student. The picture showed Novak breaking a pile of Two-inch thick pieces of marble with his backfist. Lee said that Novak was a powerful man who weighed well over two hundred pounds. Years later Bruce told me that Novak was so strong that no one in the bay area could make any kind of wrist lock work on him. Bruce also said that once Novak learned how to straight punch he would be difficult, if not impossible, to stop when he attacked!

Before we left James Lee's we asked about the possibility of instruction. He told us that the length of time that we were going to spend in the area was not long enough to learn even the basic moves of his system. We asked him if he knew of anyone in the Seattle area teaching Gung Fu. He said no. Howard and I thanked him for the demonstration and headed back to San Francisco. A few days later we decided to cut our trip short and returned to Seattle.

## Chapter 2

The first week after returning to Seattle I ran into a Judo friend, Charlie Woo. I told him that I had just returned from California where I had been seeking information on Karate and Gung Fu. I gave him the highlights of the trip and discussed how difficult it was to get anyone to talk about Gung Fu. He told me that I would be happy to know that there was going to be a Gung Fu demonstration during the Seafair celebration. I asked him when was it scheduled and he said that he didn't know, but that he would find out as soon as possible and let me know. I thought it strange that I had gone all the way to California looking for Gung Fu and here it was coming to Seattle. The next few times that I saw Charlie I bugged him about the date. When he finally told me the time and the place I settled back to wait for the start of Seafair, an annual summer event in Seattle.

A few weeks later Ed Hart and I were rooted in front of the stage in Chinatown waiting for the demonstration to begin. The area was crowded with people but none of them were closer to the stage than I. My arms were resting on the platform edge where I was in a position to get a worm's eye view of the whole performance. When it was finally time for the Gung Fu demonstration, someone came out and announced that there would be a delay in order that a Cha Cha demonstration could be shown. The dancers were a young girl and guy who made dancing look as though it required little effort. The dancers went through twenty different routines and I felt like screaming at them to hurry up. Finally, after what seemed like hours, the dancing ended and the Gung Fu demonstration began.

After the members of the group had filled across the stage and stood facing the audience, a spokesman for the group stepped out and gave a little background on Gung Fu and told us who the group represented. The group was from the Chinese Youth Club and most of the things that they were going to demonstrate were from the Southern Mantis style of Gung Fu. One of the group members was the same guy who had just demonstrated the Cha Cha.

The first person to demonstrate weighed around two hundred pounds and the form that he demonstrated made him look very formidable. The outstanding feature of the form was the way in which the attack was directed to the head and the upper body. The attacking weapons were the knees and the elbows. The narrator closely followed each move of the form and explained it's purpose to the audience. I was very impressed with the form and made a mental note never to get in the demonstrator's way. Several other people went through forms, and they all looked as impressive as the first demonstrator.

The last man to perform was the same one who had danced the Cha Cha. The narrator said that his name was Bruce Lee, and that he had just arrived from California. Bruce did a beautiful form from the Preying Mantis. The form involved a lot of intricate hand movements, which Bruce made even more impressive by popping his knuckles as he went through them. I was totally fascinated with Bruce's moves, and vowed that I was going to learn to move the same way. Little did I know that only a year later I would be performing on the same stage as Bruce's number one student.

Fate must have been on my side, because a week later I discovered that Bruce lived only four blocks from my house and that we both attended Edison technical School. I saw Bruce walking ahead of me every morning on the way to school, and I began to try to think of a way to approach him without turning him off. After a great deal of thought I came up with the idea that I would be better received by Bruce if he thought that I knew something about the striking arts. From that day forward I made it a point to get ahead of Bruce each morning on the way to school. Everytime that I passed a telephone pole I would either hit it or kick it, pretending that I didn't notice Bruce walking behind me. After a week or so of assaulting poles I decided that it was time to approach Bruce and ask him about instruction.

I couldn't devise a cool approach so I just waited for him to start walking toward school one day, caught up with him and asked if his name was Bruce Lee. He said that Bruce Lee was his name, and asked me what I wanted. I asked him if he practiced Gung Fu, and he said that he did. When I asked him if he would teach me, he hesitated. I said that I was very anxious to learn, and told him about my trip to California and the unsuccessful search for Gung Fu instruction. Bruce looked at me for a long time before he answered, and I got the feeling that he was weighing things in his mind. Finally he said that he would teach me, but that it had to be in a secret spot where no one could watch. He asked me if I had a place where we could practice. I told him that we could use my living room. He asked me if I lived alone, and I told him that I had two roommates. He said that they would have to leave the house whenever we practiced. I assured him that I would get rid of them, and he asked me for directions to my house.

When we arrived at school Bruce asked me what time I ate lunch. I told him that I ate around noon and then he told me to meet him in the school lounge. I was there at twelve on the dot and so was Bruce. He spent the lunch period asking about my trip to California, while I spent the time asking about the form that I had seen him demonstrate at Seafair. Bruce told me that the Preying Mantis wasn't his style, and that the form had been taught to him by Fook Young, one of the instructors at the Chinese Youth Club. He said that his own style was called Wing Chun which was one of the more modern, progressive Gung Fu styles. He said that he had practiced the style for four years before he came to the United States from Hong Kong to attend school.

Bruce wanted to know all that I could tell him about the California Gung Fu man, James Lee. When I told him about James Lee's book, he said that it was the first time that he ever heard of a Gung Fu book being written in English. He asked me how James Lee stood when he moved, and gave me several illustrated stances to pick from. I picked the horse stance as the one that James Lee had used, and Bruce said that he was probably from the Hung style. I told him that I had James Lee's book at home and offered to loan it to him.

Bruce and I met after school and walked home together. Bruce spent the time giving me a run down on Gung Fu history. We stopped at the corner a block away from the Ruby Chow restaurant where he lived and we spent a couple of hours going over a variety of moves from several different Gung Fu styles. When I asked him how his style looked, he told me that it

didn't have the grace and beauty of other styles, but it more than made up for this deficiency by being one of the more functional fighting styles. Bruce said that the basic lack of beauty in his style was one of the reasons that it wasn't more popular. He said that it was difficult to demonstrate the effectiveness of the style to the uninitiated without hitting them. He also said that the few people who were skillful enough to tie-up people without hitting them, were not too interested in proving the effectiveness of the method unless they were involved in a fight.

Finally Bruce said that he had to go to work, but that he would see me at six. I rushed home and told both of my roommates that Bruce was going to teach me Gung Fu, and one of the conditions was that no one else could be around. Ed and Ron both realized how important Bruce's instructions was to me and said that they would gladly leave whenever he came to teach.

At six o'clock there was a knock at the door, and there was Bruce Lee ready to give me private lessons. I asked Bruce to come in and showed him around the place. Once he had assured himself that there wasn't anyone there he said, "Let's get on with it". First he asked me to show him what I knew about Gung Fu. The only things that I knew had been taken from James Lee's book, and Bruce was hardly impressed with my performance. Bruce asked to see Lee's book, and he spent ten minutes thumbing through the pages without saying a word. When he finally spoke, it was to tell me that most of the techniques in the book were from the Hung style of Gung Fu, which he had onced practiced. Bruce said that the Hung was very popular in Hong Kong because of it's reputation for strong foot work and punching power. Bruce was impressed with the demonstration of Lee's breaking power (the cover showed Lee breaking either a large board or a piece of marble).

Bruce asked if I knew anything about other martial arts, and I told him that I had done a little boxing in the Air Force and that I was currently practicing Judo. Bruce said that he wasn't too familiar with either boxing or Judo, and asked for a demonstration of the latter. I began my demonstration by showing him my favorite throw, Osotogari. When I came in on him to do the throw I expected a little resistance. The speed of the throw and Bruce's lack of resistance caused him to go with it a lot faster than I had anticipated, and his head narrowly missed the sharp metal corner of the bed. It was a near miss that could have killed or maimed him, but Bruce showed no reaction. He was impressed with my throwing, but he didn't like the idea of having to hold on to do it.

Bruce demonstrated the effectiveness of his style by having me throw punches at him from any and all angles. He said, "Hit me any way that you can". I threw jabs, hooks, and haymakers as fast as I could, but none of them made contact. Each punch was blocked and I always ended up staring at the wrong end of Bruce's fist. Once he had shown me that he could stop all of my punches from long range, he demonstrated that I was completely helpless at close range. Everytime that his hands made contact with mine, I was unable to do anything. His hands controlled mine with a kind of friction that stopped any kind of forward movement. Whenever I tried to nullify this friction by changing my angle of attack, Bruce would also change his angle of defense and my hands were still unable to move forward. I figured that if I wasn't able to get in, I would at least be able to get away, but when I tried

to withdraw my hands I found that I wasn't able to pull them back without getting hit. Next I attempted to disengage and go around his hands, but this strategy was met with direct strikes to my chest. Before Bruce finished his demonstration of Wing Chun hand entrapment techniques, I was convinced that he could both hit and control me at will. Once he was positive that he had convinced me of the effectiveness of the style, Bruce went back to the beginning and showed me the basis for Wing Chun.

He said that the style had been developed by a woman whose name was Yim Wing Chun. She had first learned self-defense from a Buddhist nun named Ng Mui, and latter had developed her own system. She had developed the style at a time when there was a great deal of bragging among the proponents of different Gung Fu styles as to which one was the best. Wing Chun decided to prove that none of them were very good. She did this by creating a style with principles based on skill rather than strength. Bruce said that the fact that Wing Chun was a women had a lot to do with the type of system that she formulated. She didn't have the same strength as a man, so she was forced to develop ways to compensate for this deficit.

Bruce said that although Wing Chun developed the style, she wasn't the one who made it famous. The style was made famous by one of China's leading doctors who was so taken with the style that he gave up his practice of medicine and devoted all of his time to the further development of the art which had eventually been passed on to Yip man who was Bruce Lee's teacher.

Yip Man was from Fut Shan in the southern part of mainland China. Bruce said that Yip Man had come to Hong Kong in the 1940's. According to him Yip Man had once killed another Gung Fu man with one punch when the man had refused to leave his school after Yip Man had refused the man's challenge. The incident had occurred long before Bruce became one of Yip Man's students, but he said he found the story easy to believe because of the awesome punching power that his teacher possessed.

Bruce said that although Yip Man was a small man who weighed less than one hundred and ten pounds, he was still able to hit harder than any of his younger students. This was told to me in the latter part of 1959, when Yip Man was in his early sixties.

The final thing that Bruce taught me that first day was the first part of the first Wing Chun form, Sil Lim Tao. He went through the form several times in slow motion and explained that it was broken into three different parts. He said that I should concentrate on learning the form one part at a time. I had a very difficult time learning to move through the form, but Bruce told me that my funbling was to be expected. After a four hour practice session, Bruce said that he had to leave but that he would meet me in the morning on the way to school. When Bruce left I was firmly impressed with him, Wing Chun, and the art of Gung fu.

I was so excited about learning from Bruce that I was unable to get to sleep that night. When Ed and Ron came home I told them everything that had transpired. They said that if I was so impressed with the guy, he must really be something special. I told them that Bruce could do things that I hadn't even thought possible. They both expressed a strong desire to meet Bruce and see him perform his Gung Fu. I told them that it would probably be a while before Bruce would allow anyone around during our practice



sessions, but that I would do what I could to make him change his mind once I was in solid with him.

The next morning I got out of bed early so that there could be no chance of missing my meeting with Bruce. At ten minutes to eight I was standing on a corner near Ruby Chow's restaurant waiting for Bruce to appear. At eight o'clock Bruce came bouncing around the corner, and the two of us continued on to school. I had been doing a lot of thinking since our first practice session, and I wanted him to be aware of how I felt about his instructing me in his art. I told him I appreciated the things that he had shown me, and that I was really going to work hard to justify the time that he was taking to teach me.

On the way to school Bruce talked about the different styles of Gung Fu. He told me that the styles that held the most interest for him were the Tia Chi, Northern Mantis, Eagle Claw, and the Pa Kua. The style that impressed him the most was the Tia Chi. It's major concept of making oneself like a spinning ball was something that Bruce could understand. He also liked the concept of diverting incoming energy back to it's source with a minimum of his own energy being spent. Bruce was learning some Tai Chi from Fook Young the head instructor at the Chinese Youth Club. Fook Young was a close friend of Bruce's father, and Bruce looked on him as an uncle.

We spent the lunch period of the second day outside looking for a place to practice. After looking for twenty minutes we found a space under a metal stairwell and Bruce showed me some of the things that he was learning from Fook Young. Bruce assumed the classical Tai Chi stance and began a series of slow movements. He told me that there were a hundred and eight moves in the form and that a hundred and eight seemed to be a magical number for the Chinese because it appeared in many of the Chinese Gung Fu systems.

Bruce periodically interrupted his slow movements and explained the purpose of the various moves. Each movement of the form had a name, and some of the more descriptive names that I can recall are "the monkey stealing the peach", which is an attack to the groin, and "twin pearl grab", which is a two finger attack to the eyes. Bruce said that Tai Chi was always practiced in slow motion, and that twenty years of practice was no guarantee that one would be able to apply it's principles effectively.

Bruce was eighteen years old and this was the period of his highest interest in the soft and subtle styles of Gung Fu. He was searching for a philosophical fighting system that could lead him to the path of Gung Fu greatness. Part of his interest in the Tia Chi was based on a story that had come down through the years that the best Gung Fu man who had ever lived was a Tia Chi master. Before this master had died he had developed almost magical powers which enabled him to perform amazing feats of strength. His greatest triumph was tracking down a man-eating tiger that had killed several members of a nearby village, and slaying it with his bare hands. According to the legend, this master had never taught any students and all of his knowledge had gone to his grave with him.

The second night that we practiced, Bruce showed me why he could control my movements and I couldn't control his. The two techniques that allowed him to apply his defensive moves were the deflection of incoming

punches, and his use of friction. He stressed that incoming energy was to be deflected rather than met head on. Next he showed me the use of rotating punches and taught me the rudiments of sticking hands, which is the proper name for Wing Chun's method of controlling an opponent's defenses and attacks.

I spent the next six months practicing with Bruce everyday during the lunch period and after school. Bruce had to clean Ruby Chow's restaurant every night before it opened for dinner, but we always managed to get in some practice time before his chores. Bruce didn't get along with Ruby Chow very well, because he hated cleaning the restaurant and regarded himself as an exploited worker. Whenever I went to the restaurant with him, he would ask me to wait outside. He told me that some of the people there didn't like blacks, and that it would be better for everyone if I remained outside. Bruce said that the only exciting thing that ever happened at the restaurant was when he had gotten into an argument with one of the cooks. He said that the cook had grabbed one of several meat cleavers and had threatened him. Bruce had dared the man to take a swing at him, but the cook had wisely put the cleaver down and backed away.

Chinese restaurants in the United States were a source of irritation to Bruce because he felt that they exploited the existence of cheap Chinese labor. He said that Benevolent Associations imported people from Hong Kong, put them in small cheap rooms and sent them to work in Chinese restaurants for less than union wages. Many of these people were illiterate and few of them could speak English, which made it easy for them to be cheated out of benefits such as social security and unemployment compensation. Some restaurant owners would tell the workers that they were being paid under the table, and that this type of payment was beneficial to them because they could avoid paying taxes. Bruce said that this practice was a direct outgrowth of the exploitive policies of the earlier tongs, which had imported illiterate people and kept them on opium until they needed someone killed. Bruce despised this kind of exploitation and felt that he was a victim of it. He told me that his living arrangements at Ruby Chow's weren't quite what he had expected. The Chow family was friendly with his family and that he had thought that his stay at the Chow's while he attended school would be more like that of a guest rather than an employee.

Sometimes while I was waiting for Bruce to finish with his chores, he would bring out something that he had cooked. Bruce was a very good cook and he let his creative mixture of Gung Fu influence his creation of Chinese dishes which were always unique, and tasty.

The head of the Chow family, Ping Chow was a performer of sorts and he was always asking Bruce to include him in our later Gung Fu demonstrations, which he sometimes did.

Bruce had his wooden dummy set up outside in the back of the restaurant under a small roof that gave him partial protection from the elements. The wooden dummy is a device that is used to simulate the body of an opponent. It is made of teak or some other hard wood, and practice with it develops the arms, and general coordination. Bruce spent two to four hours practicing on the dummy every day and the sharpness of his attack was due, in part, to this training. Bruce's attacks on the dummy were very noisy and he was only allowed to practice with it during certain hours of the day.

After work, Bruce would come down to my house and we would work out for a couple of hours. Sometimes we would go down to the Tia Tung restaurant after the work-out. Bruce was a voracious eater who could hold his own with anyone. Fortunately his metabolism was such that he could eat enormous amounts of food and never gain weight. I, on the other hand, was constantly faced with the threat of fat. Bruce was never silent during our eating sessions, and his conversations always dealt with one of three topics, Gung Fu, Hong Kong, or the Cha Cha.

Everyday after school we stopped on the corner a block away from Ruby Chow's and went over the merits of the different styles. My knowledge of the various styles was based on what I had learned from Bruce, but I was able to function as a fairly effective critic as he moved through his rendition of how he thought each of the different methods expressed their system of defense and attack. Bruce would move through the different forms, and I would ask pointed questions about how the techniques that he was testing would work against Wing Chun, or against an opponent who could move with his same speed. If Bruce thought that the technique wouldn't work against him, he would discard it.

Whenever Bruce felt that he had the best understanding of a clan's basic principles, that he could acquire without formal instruction, he would work on the techniques until he felt that his execution of them was such that any more time spent would be wasted. At this point he would try the techniques on me. I usually played the part of the practice dummy, but sometimes we would switch roles and I would attack him in the form of the other style. This method of practice gave Bruce some insight into the way that other styles attacked and defended, but the great speed advantage that he had over me prevented me from pressing him too hard.

There was a short period of time in 1960 when Bruce was concerned primarily with style and form in Gung Fu, rather than function. He liked the Southern Mantis forms not because they were effective, but because they looked and felt good to him when he demonstrated them and his fondness for the Tai Chi style was based on its grace and beauty. The fascination that Bruce had for the Eagle Claw was based on the flexibility that its practitioners could demonstrate. Bruce made several trips to Vancouver, B.C., to purchase books on the various Gung Fu styles. He brought back books on the Southern Mantis, the Eagle Claw, the Dragon, the Tai Chi, the Choy Li Fut, the Hsing-i, the Sil Lum, the Pa-kau, and the Hung. When he returned from these trips, he spent all of his spare time reading and re-reading the text of the various books seeking a paragraph or line that would increase his ability to function at a higher level.

Bruce was nineteen years old and his thinking about his own skill level was that he was little more than an advanced beginner. He had emerged from several fights unharmed, but he somehow didn't equate these victories with the possession of good Gung Fu skill. The way that he talked about the masters of old led me to believe that Bruce expected to find similar masters among today's clan leaders. His dream during this period was to learn the secrets of these heroes of the different clans and combine them into a super system.

Bruce's personal knowledge of the high skill level of Wing Chun practitioners caused him to project this high skill level to the better

practitioners of other clans. Later he found out that his projections didn't hold true because the skill level of people in other styles was not generally as high as the skill level of the better people in his style. Bruce reacted to this discovery as though the absence of superior masters in the various other styles was a personal affront. The death of this illusion inspired Bruce to turn his own dreams into reality. He still believed that the seeds for greatness existed in each of the various methods, but he no longer believed that he would be able to obtain these seeds from the members of any of the different styles because he felt that few practitioners understood how to best use the techniques of their method.

Bruce still longed to have the various styles fall in line with his dreams, and he sat about trying to influence teachers of the various methods. On his return trips to Hong Kong, Bruce requested that he be allowed to practice and study some of the various styles. Several teachers granted him the privilege of studying their methods, but none of them were aware of his ultimate goal.

Bruce took parts of each style and hone them into more functional techniques. When the techniques were the best that he could make them he would return to the school and demonstrate the changes that he had made. He was always regarded as a debaucher of tradition rather than an innovator, and repeated rebukes finally caused him to turn away from the classical methods. Many people both inside and outside the clans, undoubtedly thought that Bruce was quite brash in thinking that he could improve on a traditional form that had existed for hundreds of years. The fact was that Bruce wanted all styles of Gung Fu to be as effective as possible, and he was naive enough to think that everyone was looking for a way to improve their technique. Bruce could usually move with more speed and power than the people who were suppose to be masters of their art and if the issue between them had been settled with fists, Bruce would have easily emerged the victor.

Bruce's problem was one that is common to all budding geniuses. It is difficult to be taken seriously if you are young. He was trying to introduce the western concept of pragmatic function to the eastern concept of Gung Fu, and it didn't work. He discovered that the West exists on the concept of function and practicality, while the East exists on the concept of structure and form.

A month after I started to learn from Bruce I talked him into showing the Wing Chun style to my roommate, Ed Hart. When I told Bruce that Ed was one of my best friends, he said that it would be alright for him to attend our next practice session. The first time that I watched Ed work out with Bruce I got a birdseye view of the way that I looked when I had first tried to get in on Bruce. Every time that Ed tried to move in, he found himself tied up and unable to either retreat or attack. I was very impressed with the way that Bruce easily controlled Ed because I had a lot of respect for Ed's fighting ability. Ed had been a professional boxer, and he could throw punches without the slightest bit of a telegraph but, nothing that he did worked against Bruce, he was totally ineffective. Bruce's handling of Ed convinced me that the man was indeed a master at his art and my interest in Judo waned as my interest in Gung Fu grew. Ed could already use his hands and his difficulty with switching to the Wing Chun method caused him to continue his concentration on the practice of Judo.

I was convinced that Bruce was the greatest. He could punch as fast as any lightweight boxer, close ground from a distance of five feet like an Olympic fencer, and hit as hard as a good middleweight boxer. He could also tie up your hands in ways that allowed him to hit you at will while you were completely unable to strike back. No matter which way you moved your hands, his hands stuck to them like glue, and the more force that you used the better his hands stuck to you.

During the first few months that I knew Bruce he told me a great deal about himself and his life in Hong Kong. He said that he had been born into a family that was fairly well off, by Hong Kong standards. His father was a Chinese opera star and it was on one of his trips to the U.S. that Bruce had been born. He was born in San Francisco in 1940. He felt that his being born in the states was a lucky break for him, because it made him a dual citizen of Britain and the United States until he reached twentyone.

Bruce said that his first entry into the martial arts was through his father's association with other actors who used some of the Gung Fu movements in their work. Bruce persuaded some of these people to show him movements without his father's knowledge. He practiced the moves in secret because he didn't want his father to know what he was doing. Bruce's father wanted all of his children to be scholars, and he didn't hold with the likes of Gung Fu. Bruce told me that in Hong Kong Gung Fu men didn't have the same status as the martial artists of other Asian countries. He said that in Hong Kong most Gung Fu men were considered to be little more than thugs.

Several of the actors that Bruce knew practiced Tai Chi, but the man who first taught him was from the Hung style. Bruce showed me some pictures of the man and he appeared to be a tough individual. He was about five foot ten inches tall and weighed over two hundred pounds. Bruce said that the man was a good teacher, and that he had learned a lot from him about the Hung and other styles. One picture that Bruce had of the man showed him practicing his footwork on two foot high stakes that were driven into the ground. Another picture showed him practicing footwork on small

bottles that were spread out in a form pattern. The top of the bottles didn't leave the man much margin for error, but Bruce said that he had seldom seen the man fall from the bottles as he went through his practice sessions. Bruce showed me some books that the man had sent him on Chinese Jiu Jitsu. He said the man was highly skilled in the use of these joint and wrist locks and that he had taught a few of them to him before he had left Hong Kong.

Bruce said that in those early days he had a strong feeling for the Hung style because of its reputation for strong footwork and punching. He often talked about members of the Hung style who could resist the pull of several men once they were firm in the horse stance. In addition to the Gung Fu that he was learning, Bruce was working out with weights, springs, and on the parallel bars. He never talked openly about his reasons for giving up the practice of the Hung style, but he hinted that one time things had not gone well for him in a fight. This experience had caused him to seek out a method which he could better apply.

One of Bruce's running partners was a guy named Auh Long. Auh Long was always fighting, but he never lost. When Bruce would ask him how it was that he could be involved in so many encounters and never lose, he said that he was just lucky. Bruce knew that it took more than luck to keep winning the way that Auh Long did, and he vowed to discover his secret. One day Auh Long told Bruce that if he wanted to know how he could always do so well in fights that he should come with him and he would find out the answer. Bruce leaped at the opportunity and found himself at the Wing Chun school being introduced to the assistant instructor. He asked Bruce if he knew anything about Gung Fu, and Bruce told him that he knew a little about the Hung style. He asked Bruce if he knew anything about the Wing Chun style and Bruce told him that he didn't know what it was, but if it was the thing that enabled Auh Long to win all of his fights that it must be something that worked quite well. The assistant gave Bruce a demonstration of how the style worked and Bruce remained silent until he showed the stance that the style fought from. Bruce said that the stance didn't look too good to him because both feet were paralleled, and it seemed to leave an opening for a kick. His curiosity got the best of him, and he asked the assistant if he wasn't vulnerable to a kick. The man told Bruce to kick at him, but Bruce said that he didn't want to because the assistant might get angry if the kick got through. After Bruce's last statement, the assistant insisted that Bruce kick at him which he did. The next instant he was sitting on the floor holding a shin which he thought was broken. Bruce sat on the floor for a couple of minutes, and when he tried to stand he found that he couldn't stand on the leg that had been struck by the assistant's forearm. Later when he had recovered the use of his leg he made arrangements to join the style.

Bruce became a member of the style, and Auh Long began to work with him outside of the school's regular practice time. Bruce said that Auh Long's instruction was one of the major reason that he advanced so quickly in the style. Auh Long was one of the best people in the Wing Chun style. He was close to six feet tall, and weighed around one hundred and seventy pounds. His technique was excellent because it had been honed to perfection in the streets of Hong Kong against some of the city's best fighters. According to

Bruce, the worst that had ever happened to Auh Long was that he had been backed up in a fight with Richard Leong, a young master from the Choy Li Fut style. Bruce said that the fight had finally ended in a draw with neither of the two opponents able to score an advantage. Richard's stand against Auh Long caused Bruce to befriend him several years later in the U.S. I might add that the befriending was done out of respect for Richard, and not fear of what he could do.

Another man who was in part responsible for Bruce's quick progress was Auh Hing, a man who Bruce called the best fighter in the clan. Bruce told me that when he left Hong Kong Auh Hing had already won well over a hundred fights against the city's best Gung Fu men. Bruce said that Auh Hing had also fought and defeated several British sailors, but that he didn't consider these to be fights because of their lack of fighting skill. Hing was short and weighed one hundred and twenty pounds. Bruce said that Hing had come to the Wing Chun style from the Tai Chi, because he had once lost a fight using that method. He said that whenever he practiced with either of these two men that he would get the hell knocked out of him. He had long since forgotten the number of bloody noses and swollen lips that he had received from them. Whenever they stuck hands with him, they would pinch his chest until it turned black and blue. The marks that Bruce saw in the mirror at the end of each day were a special motivation for him to improve. Whenever he stuck hands with Auh Long or Auh Hing, they were in complete control and they wouldn't stop battering him around until they grew tired of the game. Bruce said that he often felt like quitting, but he stuck it out until he was finally able to make them work a little to get in on him. Soon he was able to handle many of the lesser students in the style who could, and did, push him around when he first started practicing.

When Bruce first came to the states he told me that he could hit Auh Long and Auh Hing once for every three times that they could hit him. His goal was to become skillful enough to be able to hit them at will, with them unable to hit him. Two other people who played a strong role in his development were his teacher, Yip Man, and Yip Man's assistant. Bruce took private lessons from both of these people, and he once remarked that with all of the special instruction that he had received it would have been difficult, if not impossible, not to have learned his lessons well.

Each of these four people gave Bruce a different perspective on fighting with the Wing Chun method. Yip Man was a classic example of economy of motion. The years had made all of his moves short, smooth, and powerful. The assistant wasn't a very aggressive man but his defense was excellent, and it gave Bruce insight into a solid defense.

Clan rank in Gung Fu is based on the time of entry into the school, rather than on personal skill. Someone joining the school the day before you becomes your senior and you become his junior. This classification remains with you as long as you are a member of the clan, or until you become a teacher.

The structure of the clan is like that of a large family; the C-Foo is like the father, the C-hing are like uncles, and the C-dye are like cousins. It is the duty of the seniors to protect the juniors, and the duty of all to protect the clan name. Following this code often means backing up the claim of some senior who brags to a member of another clan that there is a junior in his

style who can beat any of his juniors. Whenever a junior is placed in this position, there is nothing to do except pick up the challenge. The bad thing about the process is that if you lose, you get cuffed around by the members of your own style because your loss causes the clan to lose face and if you win you will be often called on to fight. From the way that Bruce talked, I got the impression that he was called on quite often and that he really enjoyed the encounters.

The fact that Gung Fu was looked on by so many people with disfavor was the primary reason that Bruce did not tell his father that he was practicing Wing Chun. Bruce told his father that he was going to music practice whenever he went to Gung Fu. He had a great deal of respect for his father, and he would have quit Gung Fu in a second if his father had ordered it. Bruce made his deception to his father a little more palatable by telling himself that he really wasn't going against his father's wishes because he had never been specifically told not to practice Gung Fu.

When Bruce finally decided to tell his father about his Gung Fu he was one of the best people in the Wing Chun style. The day that he decided to tell his father he took him aside and told him that he had something to show him. His father watched him go through all of his moves without comment and Bruce thought he was displeased. When his father spoke it was to tell him that he was proud of the skill that he had developed, and that as long as Gung Fu practice didn't disrupt his schooling he had no objections to his practice of the art. Bruce's father had done a little Tai Chi and he talked to Bruce about how it compared to Wing Chun. His father's interest in Tai Chi might have been one of the reasons for Bruce's interest in the art. Showing his father was a big event in Bruce's life because it freed him from the burden of having to hide something that he loved so much from his father.

Bruce told me that most of the Gung Fu fights in Hong Kong took place in hotel rooms, on rooftops, or in basements. He said that fighting was banned by law and that the penalties were severe because of a few deaths that had resulted over the years. Bruce said that hotel rooms were the worst place to fight in because the loser of the fight was at the complete mercy of the winner. The two opponents were locked in a room and there wasn't anyone to pull the winner off of the loser once he became helpless.

The only fight that Bruce talked about having while he was in Hong Kong was a fight with a member of the Choy Li Fut style. Bruce said that his blocking was less than it should have been and he was dazed by a partial strike to the head. The punch had caught Bruce above the eye, and almost knocked him out. The event caused such intense fear in him that he lashed out and knocked out his opponent with one punch. After the fight, Bruce started immediately to train against over hand strikes. Bruce said that this event set a pattern for him that he was to follow all of his life. The pattern that he spoke of was the practice of correcting his weaknesses after each fight.

The most interesting stories that Bruce told about Hong Kong concerned the fighting skills of his seniors. He said that Auh Hing had once fought an assistant instructor from the Dragon style who outweighed him by a hundred pounds. Auh Hing was not a person to stand around and wait for his opponent to attack, so the instant that he knew there was going to be a fight he rushed in and punched the Dragon man about the head. Usually



when Hing hit someone they went down, but this time the man remained on his feet. Hing's punches were tearing the man's face apart, but he couldn't knock him down. Every time his opponent got off a punch, Hing would ride it out on the man's arm. The bad thing about riding out the punches was that Hing was being driven back toward a wall that was behind him. Hing knew that getting his back to the wall might prove dangerous, so he devised a plan to let his opponent force him to the wall, and then divert his punches into it. Hing put the plan into effect and the brick wall tore his opponent's hands to pieces. The man went crazy from the pain and flailed about wildly. The man's friends finally jumped in and stopped the fight. The Dragon man was led away in a mild state of insanity with both hands beaten to a pulp, while Hing strolled away unmarked.

Bruce said that one other time things didn't go so well for Hing. He was in the final match of a Gung Fu tournament in Formosa. The match was held in a twenty foot circle. Attacks to the eyes and the groin were banned and both contestants had to wear gloves. A match could be won by scoring points, forcing the opponent to quit, or by knocking the opponent out. Hing's opponent wouldn't stand and fight, and Hing kept chasing him from the ring. Hing's opponent sensed that he didn't have a chance, and decided to get sneaky. When he was returning to the center of the ring after being driven out of bounds, he pointed at something behind Hing, and shouted, "Look Out!" When Hing turned to see what he was being warned about, the opponent let go with a kick. Bruce said that Hing partially blocked the kick, but not enough to prevent his opponent from scoring a point, and winning the match. After the match, Hing had walked up to the man and called him a coward and a sneak. He challenged him to a fight, and slapped his face when he refused. When Hing found that he couldn't goad the man into a fight, he turned and walked away. Bruce said that the reason that Hing was scored on was because of his bad habit of leaving his elbows apart. No one in the Wing Chun clan was strong enough to force Hing to close his elbows, and it led to a bad habit that Bruce felt had lost Hing the match.

Another senior that Bruce told stories about was Auh Long, the man who first introduced him to the Wing Chun style. Auh Long had moved to Australia and on the trip over he had gotten into a fight with two men on the boat. One of them had pulled a knife on him, but Auh Long had taken the knife away from the man and knocked him out. Auh Long had sustained a small cut on the arm, but it wasn't serious. When the second man saw what happened to his partner, he ran. Bruce said that the two men turned in Auh Long as having attacked them. The ship's officers questioned Auh Long, but they thought it strange that one man would attack two. They told him that they didn't want any more trouble out of him and that further fighting would result in someone going to jail. Auh Long spent the rest of the trip trying to get the two men alone, but was unable to catch them in the right place.

Bruce told me another story about Auh Long and an event that took place in Australia, between him and a fourth degree blackbelt Karateman. They were putting on a demonstration in front of the governor to show the merits of each culture's martial art. Auh Long was demonstrating that he could meet the attack of the Karateman without seeing him. The only

restriction was that the Karateman had to attack to the front and above the waist. The match ended with the Karateman knocked out. The only damage that Auh Long sustained was two bruised forearms. After the match the Karateman told Auh Long that he could break sticks and stones, but he couldn't break the Wing Chun defense. Bruce felt that Auh Long had gotten lucky and that he shouldn't have tried what he did but he wasn't the slightest bit surprised that the match had taken place, because Auh Long was known to try risky things.

## Chapter 4

The way that the British treated the Chinese in their own country was a sore spot with Bruce. He said that the petty discrimination they had to deal with made them second class citizens. Many of the young Chinese he ran with thought that something should be done about the situation, and their favorite form of exercise was beating up on the British. Several of the insults that Bruce talked to me about appeared in his later movies. There were signs stating that no dogs or Chinese were allowed in the parks, while the Japanese came and went as they pleased. Indian park guards who did the bidding of those who treated their own people like second class citizens, and a general lack of rights when Chinese had to deal with foreigners in their own country.

Depicting the Japanese in a poor light in his movies was partially for the benefit of the Chinese audiences, but it was also Bruce's reaction to the way that the Japanese had treated the Chinese in the past. He felt that some of the things that had been done to the Chinese during World War II could never be forgotten. He never stopped talking about the way that Chinese babies had been thrown into the air and caught on bayonets while their parents were forced to stand and watch. Bruce couldn't accept the fact that one Asian country would treat another Asian country so poorly, while they spared Westerners and treated them with greater humanity. While it's true that all victims suffered during the course of the war, the Asian countries suffered greater physical and psychological pain.

Another thing that angered Bruce about the Japanese was that they had taken several Chinese customs and claimed them as their own. Bruce had a lot of personal reasons to dislike the past nationalistic policies of Japan, but he didn't let any of them get in the way of individual friendships with Japanese people. Three of Bruce's first students were Japanese, and two of these students were from Japan.

At one time Bruce was very much in love with a Japanese girl who he would have married if things had worked out right. Bruce told me that the girl had to take care of her mother and that she agreed to marry him if he was ready to accept that responsibility. Bruce had no means to support her at the time, and he told her that they would have to wait. The girl told Bruce that she couldn't wait, and broke off the relationship. Bruce was heartbroken and he spent the next few weeks depressed. He didn't do anything during this period except draw pictures of the girl, and talk to his close friends about the emotions that he felt. This contradicts those who have said that Bruce was a cold and unfeeling person who cared about no one other than himself.

Bruce told me that living conditions in Hong Kong for the average Chinese were pretty bad. The year was 1959, and many of the people were still unable to read and write. He said that a large portion of the population lived on small boats in the harbor, and that many of them never came ashore. Bruce said that thousands of people were born, lived, and died on the water, and that many of the people who lived on the shore lived in cardboard boxes, and that they were lucky to get them. Several of the hill areas surrounding the city were populated by the British and wealthy Chinese and these were areas where a poorly dressed Chinese could get in

trouble with the law unless he had a good reason for being there.

The British sent their children to private schools where their only contact with Chinese was with the children of wealthy people. Bruce said that in any encounter between the British and the Chinese, the British were always found to be in the right. Bruce felt that much of the poor social climate in Hong Kong was due to the lack of attempts by the British to change the lot of the average Chinese. The schools that Bruce attended were Catholic and much of what they tried to teach him was in direct conflict with his own interest in Chinese culture, history, and philosophy.

When Bruce began the practice of Wing Chun, he spent most of his school time training his hands against the desk and daydreaming about China's glorious past. He told me that pressing upward with his hand against his desk was the thing that led to his discovery of a new kind of energy in sticking hands. Bruce would press upward against the desk with his palm to develop tawn sow, one of the Wing Chun hand positions. One day while he was pushing upward, his hand slipped off the edge of the desk and flew forward with great speed and force. This event caused Bruce to look into the possibility of transferring the same kind of energy in the Wing Chun sticking hand movements. Bruce figured that correctly applied pressure toward an opponent's body would result in the same kind of forward movement that occurred when he pushed upward against the desk and let his hand slip off of the edge. Bruce knew that if he could successfully transfer the same kind of energy to sticking hands that his sticking would eventually be unstoppable. This discovery turned out to be one of the keys to his later development, because it allowed him to circumvent classical Wing Chun sticking.

Bruce's main interests were Gung Fu, Cha Cha, girls, philosophy, and Chinese history. Bruce told me that he had once entered a boxing tournament on a lark, and had won. Someone had bet him that he wouldn't have a chance but he had entered the contest and won with ease. Bruce said that he didn't have the slightest bit of boxing experience, but he felt that he could win. He had limited the technique that he used to Wing Chun straight punching, mixed with a few double punches. The thing that had thrown his opponents off was the way that he punched and blocked at the same time. The concept was completely foreign to the boxers and there wasn't any way that they could cope with it. The kind of gamble that Bruce took by entering the boxing contest was the kind of chance that better Wing Chun men took all the time. Often they didn't know what they were getting into, but they were always confident that somehow they would come out on top.

Bruce had a following among the beautiful young starlets of Hong Kong, and he often showed me some of the pictures that they sent him in the mail. He said that a lot of them liked to go out with him because of the way that he danced the Cha Cha. Next to Gung Fu Bruce liked to dance, and I heard him say more than once that he really got more fun out of dancing but, that he had an iron clad commitment to Gung Fu and he was determined to become the best Gung Fu man in the world. His later desire was to be the best martial artist in the world.

One of Bruce's primary needs was to be seen and noticed. This need often led him to demonstrate what he could do. Most of the time when Bruce performed, people thought he was on an ego trip. Actually he was a proud

and lonely man who knew of no other way to keep people around him. Most of the time Bruce was in competition with himself. He did his tricks to see if he could do today what had been impossible yesterday.

If you were Bruce's friend he would spend hours teaching you how to do something. Several times he tried to teach me Chinese so that I would be able to speak the language when I went to Hong Kong with him. He also tried to teach me how to dance, but I wasn't sufficiently motivated to learn either of these disciplines. He was successful in teaching me about Chinese thought and how to understand Chinese methods of communication.

Bruce used to talk a lot about the sights of Hong Kong and the places that he was going to show me when we went there. He said that he was going to take me to some restaurants on the waterfront where you could pick your dinner live from a tank and have it cooked to order; visit some of the night spots where they danced the Cha Cha into the wee hours of the morning, and take ferry boat rides from Hong Kong to Kowloon and Mocha.

Bruce spent a lot of time in Kowloon, and occasionally went to Mocha. The long ferry rides were the thing that he enjoyed most about his trips to Kowloon and Mocha. Bruce spent some of the most peaceful moments of his life on these boat trips. He described Kowloon as a nice place to enjoy a relaxed evening, and said that his trips there were often taken just to get away from the masses of people who generally packed the streets of Hong Kong. His description of Mocha was quite different, he said that it was the original sin city where a person could find anything they wanted if they had the money to pay for it. Bruce told me that he had once gone to the Chinese border. He said that he spent the whole day watching people go in and come out, and wondered if he would be able to get out if he were to slip in.

Bruce was proud of the advancements that had been made on the mainland, and he made it a point at Edison Tech to introduce me to several students from there. Bruce wanted me to have an accurate idea of what was going on inside Red China. He had a strong love for things Chinese and this love transcended political systems. He was equally proud of the changes that had taken place on Taiwan.

Bruce made sure that I heard first-hand how things were on the mainland before and after the advent of the new order. The people I talked with told me that many of the old ways had changed, and that with these changes the burden of the masses had also changed. Begging in the streets, women being sold into slavery, starvation, and ignorance perpetuated by the ruling class had all changed. Others told me that the same kind of changes had taken place on Taiwan. Everyone I talked with told me that these and other changes had been made to help the greatest number of Chinese people. I found it easy to believe these people because although most of them had escaped from the mainland, they still maintained that what was happening there was good for the majority of the people.

Bruce often said that he would have been happy to have spent his life searching out the greatness of past Gung Fu masters on the mainland. He said that he would like to do the same thing with Gung Fu that the government had done with politics and economics. The government had made a critical examination of the old ways and extracted the things that

were applicable to the present. Later in his career Bruce managed to partially accomplish this goal by culling through the old Gung Fu ways and putting parts of them into a new framework.

When Bruce talked to people who had come from the mainland, he always asked them about Gung Fu. They all told him fantastic stories some of which he related to me. One story was about a master who could punch so fast that you couldn't see his strike. He would demonstrate his skill by punching holes in melons. Prior to his striking a melon he would have it inspected by several people from the audience and it would be found to be intact. After he had executed his invisible thrust before the crowd he would have them re-examine the melon and it was found to contain finger holes. The crowd was never able to focus in on the punch, and no one ever saw the actual strike.

Another story that Bruce related to me involved a man who could twist a steel bar into a pretzel-like ball. The man would pass the bar among the people in the audience before he twisted the bar and no one was able to bend it. Stories like these inspired Bruce. They gave him goals to strive for and it didn't matter if the stories were true or false, because they provided Bruce with the direction that finally led him to the skill level that he was seeking.

I once had the opportunity to meet the son of one of the legendary masters that Bruce was always talking about. Bruce brought the man down to Seattle Dojo after one of the workouts. Bruce told me that the man's father was one of the best Hung men who had ever lived, and that his skill was known throughout the mainland. This master's favorite weapon was a footsweep which he used to up-end all of his opponents. He used his shin as the attacking part of the leg and could perform the technique with blinding speed. The master had killed all of the feeling in his leg by tapping on his shins with the heavy clay pipe that he smoked. He had further built up the leg by training against a post in the ground. He had been in hundreds of fights and the technique had failed him only once. The loss had such a traumatic effect on him that he had refused to teach his art to his younger son.

Prior to his father's defeat the son had spent all of his time readying himself for instruction in his father's art. This preparation involved the acquisition of all the major skills of an acrobat. He was ready to start learning the fighting skills when his father suffered his first and only defeat. After the loss his father told him that he couldn't suffer a similar defeat if he didn't know how to fight, and he vowed to never teach him his art. No matter what the son said or did the father refused to teach him. The young man had finally given up and became an acrobat. He showed Bruce and I some of his stunts and we were both impressed with his skill. For ten minutes he moved through handstands, backflips, and body contortions, none of which either Bruce or I could do. Later we went to Tai Tung to eat and Bruce kept pumping the man about his father's training methods. He wanted to know how the father had trained to reach the skill level that he possessed and how the skill was maintained once that it was acquired. The man told Bruce everything that he could about his father's training methods and Bruce recorded it all in his memory bank. I cannot recall the man's name because I only met him once sixteen years ago. He was on a tour of the United States and a mutual friend had told him to look in on Bruce. He was

performing in a Chinese acrobatic review and was only in town for the day.

In Hong Kong early morning is the time to see people practicing Gung Fu. Bruce said that everyone tries to beat the sun by getting an early start. He said that you can witness a lot of different styles during the early morning hours but the one that is most in evidence is the Tai Chi. Bruce said that many of the old people practice this form for exercise. Morning is also the time when a lot of fighting takes place among the practitioners of the various styles. People from one style will be going through their forms when someone from another style comes along and makes some negative comment. The challenger might begin the build up to the fight by standing there scratching his head in amazement as he watches the member of another clan go through his forms. Eventually the man would notice him staring and ask, "What are you looking at?"

The on-looker would reply with something like, "I don't know. Is that some kind of dance or something?" At this point the other man might ask if he were trying to be a wise ass. If the on-looker responded with a direct yes, the fight was on. If he wanted to prolong the game he might respond with something like, "I'm just curious to know what it is that you are doing?" The practitioner might respond with, "I am doing a style of Gung Fu". The onlooker's comment might be, "Wow! Is it true that you people can kill with a single blow?" The practitioner's response to this question might be, "I don't know what you have heard from other people about Gung Fu, but the people in my style can do a lot of things".

At this point the onlooker might ask for a demonstration and the fight was on. Bruce said that this was one of the primary ways that fights started, and that all who practiced out in the open should be prepared to suffer the consequences. Bruce gave me the impression that fighting was one of the few things in Hong Kong that didn't cost a lot of money and was therefore a favorite pastime of the younger people.

## Chapter Five

Bruce's teacher Yip Man, was still skillful enough at age sixty-four and 110 pounds that no one in the style could touch him. Bruce always talked about him with great reverence, and I felt that he was proud to have studied under him. Through Bruce's conversations I decided that Yip Man was the Gung Fu man that I would most like to emulate.

The man with the best defenses in the Wing Chun style was the person picked to inherit the clan from Yip Man. Bruce said that while this man wasn't a very aggressive fighter, he was an excellent teacher. He said that the best fighters in the various Gung Fu styles seldom are selected to inherit a clan. Bruce went on to explain that some of the qualities that make a good fighter are qualities that might prevent someone from becoming a good teacher. He didn't consider himself to be a good teacher because he was too caught up in his own development, and had little time and patience for answering or teaching those who were not quick to learn. Unlike most people, Bruce made no secret of his distaste for teaching. This was one of the reasons that he trained me before I left the school; and it is probably the same reason that he made Taky an assistant in Seattle, James Lee an assistant in Oakland, and Inosanto an assistant in L.A.

I always felt that if Bruce hadn't come to the United States he wouldn't have gone so far in Gung Fu. The two things that motivated him here were the size and the strength of the people. In Hong Kong Bruce was a fairly large person, in this country he was relatively small. This size difference didn't escape his keen eye, and he set about adapting his technique to larger and stronger people. The fact that he could no longer depend on general strength as a backup turned him to the development of specific muscle groups that are weak on even strong men. When Bruce became strong in areas where others were weak, he knew that he had discovered another piece of the puzzle that he was trying to solve. Bruce applied this newly discovered tenet to Gung Fu by taking weak techniques that had been discarded and making them strong.

Whenever the topic of women in Gung Fu came up Bruce would mention a five foot seven inch, 180 pound girl in Hong Kong who was strong and aggressive as hell. Bruce said that she was an excellent street fighter, and enjoyed punching out men for the sheer pleasure that she got from watching them fall.

Most of the Gung Fu clans have some kind of code that they are suppose to follow. Bruce's only mention of the Wing Chun code was that it had something to do with protecting the old and the weak from the strong and coming to the aid of those in need. He felt that most of the Chinese martial arts are not as philosophical as the arts of other nations because they began with the development of fighting skills as the primary aim. In 1959 Bruce thought that Wing Chun was the most progressive of all Chinese systems, and he often spoke of it as modern Gung Fu, while the rest of the systems were still in the dark ages.

Bruce said that advanced Wing Chun students often looked different because the style allowed a certain amount of freedom of expression in its application. Bruce carried this freedom concept to its natural conclusion, which led to the creation of Jeet Kune Do. Jeet Kune Do contrary to all of



the things that have been written about it is not a system, but a process which can lead a person to the most perfect form of expression that is suited to a particular moment. It is also a concept of life and not just a concept of fighting. It involves reflex learning and the development of response skills that reflexively occur without conscious effort when the proper stimulus is presented.

Human patterns of attack have to be studied and divided into specific areas. One must categorize all of the possible moves that can be made with the right arm, left arm, right leg, left leg, etc. A close study of the various sections of the body will reveal its secrets. Once the body has been broken down into sections the development of the best responses to attacks from and into each section is possible. There are only so many ways that each limb can be used, and a proper study of this usage will allow a person to develop two or three good response patterns in each area.

These fighting concepts will work well in real situations, but they are not geared to sparring contests. Sparring is a game where rules exist and many functional fighting concepts are banned. Kicks below the waist are not allowed, attacks to the eyes and the groin are not allowed, and armbars, leg tackles, chokes, and wristlocks are not allowed. Sparring is limited to less than ten techniques which makes it very game like and not functional in the streets. If a person practices pulling punches and kicks more than he practices hitting, this is the response that he is most apt to make under stress.

The reason that Bruce's earlier techniques work so well is because of the manner in which they were learned and applied. Before any kind of physical skill can be properly learned the body must be prepared to engage in that activity. This preparation may involve a host of special exercises, or it may rely on the old standards, pushups, situps, half-squats, jumping jacks, waist turning, jogging, specialized or general weight training, windsprints, and stretching. Once the body is in fairly good shape (i.e. you can pass the national fitness test for your age group) it is time to get into the learning of the desired skill. Fighting skill that involves striking should begin with the development of the proper action in the striking limbs or areas, (e.g. some people use their head, shoulders, and hips as attacking weapons). This learning involves things like how to hold the hand or foot so that it's not injured on impact. The next step is to learn the proper way to deliver a blow. When there is sufficient power in the move to knock down someone 50 pounds heavier than you it is time to move on to methods of entry. This involves the study of how the opponent can attack and defend from a variety of stances, where his weight lies, and how his balance is weak and strong.

The next phase demands the development of a touch system, that will allow you to respond with the best possible move when your attack is jammed or blocked. The system has to be based on touch rather than vision because visual reactions are too slow when they involve the movement of most body parts. The touch system should involve the detection of pressure, and the direction of force. It should not try to stop the force, but redirect it away from the body. Skill in this area will come slowly, but it is well worth the effort.

The next step requires you to develop a blocking system based on a

detailed study of attacks. You should try to develop blocks that cover whole areas rather than responses to specific blows. The last phase in the development of an effective fighting system involves the use of blows against moving targets. One of the major pitfalls of most systems is that they train to fight people who move in the same ways that they move. In a real encounter this training could cost them the fight, or maybe even their life. Responding to attacking patterns rather than specific techniques will give you a better chance in a fight than trying to respond to specific kinds of techniques.

The final skill that binds your system together is the development of the ability to read your opponent's intentions, and react before he does. Whenever you become aware that there is going to be a fight, and that you are going to be involved whether you want it or not, it is stupid to wait for the other person to make the first move. Waiting leaves you open to the question of which way is he going to attack. If you do wait and your opponent is good it will be difficult to block his move, (Ali, as great as he is, can't keep from getting hit in a boxing match even though he is fighting someone slower). If your opponent attacks with no telegraph from a close distance he is going to hit you. Reaction time is such that if a person can reach you with an out-stretched arm or leg, that they can hit you before you can react. People like Ali escape a lot of punches because they can read people's response patterns. They start to react even before the other person's move is clearly visible. By the time the movement becomes visible, their move to check or evade it has already begun and it appears to the observer that they have reacted to the blow while it was in midair. The history of boxing, football, and fencing is full of people who have for one reason or another been able to detect slight movements in their opponents and react to them as though they possessed magical powers of prediction. In boxing there is even a name for fighters who depend solely on this type of response. They are called counter punchers.

When fighting a superior opponent you should attack the instant that you figure that there is no way out of the situation. In Judo there is a technique that often works against superior opponents with moderate success, it's called surprise, and it can work. Throughout history novices have survived by responding in ways that were unexpected. Experts sometimes have a bad habit of not giving any credit to their opponent. Other times they become so locked into old responses that they fall prey to simple direct attacks. The tendency toward making these errors can be lessened by continually reviewing responses and the context in which they occur. These are some of the elements involved in a fighting system that will allow an average person the best chance for survival in a street encounter. For those among you who wish to play tag, other means apply that don't fall within the scope of this concept.

When Bruce studied the Ying and Yang, he discovered that he could understand both parts of the symbol by contrasting them against each other. One of the things that he learned from studying the Ying and Yang was that every person is capable of working out their own Jeet Kune Do, which can be freely applied in other areas of their life.

Bruce felt that all Gung Fu started as a uniform thing based on the body structure, and the temperament of the teacher. If the teacher was small, he

taught all of his students as though they were small. Bruce believed that Gung Fu's original founders stressed conformity above all else. When some of the students began to notice that the system favored people of certain builds and temperaments they started to experiment with new ways of moving. This experimentation led to the development of a variety of short, medium, and long range systems. Further developments led to the use of hard against soft, and soft against hard moves. Bruce in his efforts to become the best martial artist in the world worked his way through all of these concepts and found most of them to be lacking when applied against a strong, effective attack. He discovered that it is impossible to block the punch of a person standing within arms reach if he doesn't telegraph the move. The same thing applies to kicks thrown within leg reach. Bruce said that the only safe place to be is close to your opponent, or two steps out of range, (the reach of the attacking limb).

A study of human reaction time shows that it takes too long for a response message to reach the part of the body that should respond if the attacker is within touching distance. Unless the attacker telegraphs, it is impossible to know when the attack is coming, and by the time it is seen it is too late to move out of the way. In the days of the Wild West this reflex lag cost a lot of would be gun fighters their lives. Often they thought that getting the drop on someone meant that the person was under their control. Many of them were shocked and amazed when their intended victim drew and fired his weapon before they could discharge their's (and I might add dam well dead because they didn't shoot when they had the chance). Any modern quick draw artist can do the same thing. They will let you hold a cocked gun in a situation where you only have to discharge your weapon before they can draw and fire, and they will beat you every time because of reflex lag.

Reflex lag was one of the factors that Bruce thought gave rise to the development of long range Gung Fu styles because the distance favored slower reaction times. If you apply the concept of reflex lag to the use of hard moves against soft moves and vice versa, you have to ask the questions, how does one determine if a move is going to be hard or soft while it is still in the air, and how does one beat his own reaction time limitations? If you can't move fast enough reflexively to respond to close range punches, there is no point in talking about hard and soft blocks. Unless your system has built-in interference devices in the stances you are not going to be able to successfully block punches thrown at close range. If your stance does contain these defenses you might possibly use some kind of hard and soft response system based on touch. The major problem with such a system is that it takes everything back to the problem of response time. If the attacker is fast he may be able to move in and out with your blocking system having little effect on his movement. This was one of the primary reasons that Bruce abandoned the touch system of Wing Chun. Bruce became so fast at closing that he was able to close from a distance of seven feet before an opponent could do more than blink an eye. Another reason Bruce developed his outside attack was to insure that no one from the Wing Chun style would be able to stop his entering moves because they would base their defenses on touch. Bruce was suspicious about someone from the

Wing Chun style trying to follow the path that he had blazed. Later he realized that there was little chance of this happening.

Bruce reached his advanced skill level by working through all of the old classical methods, and applying their concepts in new ways. He used himself as a model to train against, and figured that his ability to get around a technique meant that it didn't measure up to his standards. Ultimately Bruce arrived at a skill level where the only people that he had to worry about were people with weapons and those who were as skilled as he. In a fight with someone possessing the same skill victory would have gone to the first person to move from a distance of seven feet. I don't know of anyone who can move the way that Bruce could from a distance, but he felt that there was a strong possibility that more than one person stood in the same arena with him.

Bruce felt that many of the components of the classical systems are outdated. In ancient China there might have existed a social code that prevented people from making surprise attacks, but no such code exists today in the West. The old techniques were geared to defend against the same kind of attacks that they themselves would make. No provision was made for the then unheard of western forms of combat such as boxing, wrestling, and simple unadorned street fighting. Most of the classical Gung Fu methods would be hard pressed to successfully use their hand techniques against boxing. They would have to resort to the use of kicks to win and if these weren't more powerful than those of today's average Gung Fu man, they would lose. A prime example that supports this belief is the way that Gung Fu keeps losing to Thai boxers. The primary reason that Gung Fu men lose is because they don't know how to cope with jabs, hooks, and crosses. Bruce said that unless a person is willing to practice Gung Fu fanatically he would be better off studying boxing or wrestling, and learning how to kick. He arrived at these feelings after much personal research.

Bruce felt that some of the better Gung Fu styles had died during the Boxer Rebellion, because many of their best people were killed. Several styles were known by only a few people, and there were no written instructions on the practice of them. When these people died the system died with them. Other styles were divided into different parts which were taught to different students. When some of these people died during the rebellion all knowledge of their part of the system died with them. Other styles were taught to people having the same surname. If the family happened to die out, so did the style.

The old and the modern classical teacher puts people through all kinds of tests before he accepted them as formal students. The student is closely watched to determine his character, and if it is found to be less than desirable he is sent away. In the old days would-be students became servants to the teacher. It was their job to clean up the teacher's house, prepare his food, and attend to his general wishes. If the teacher was satisfied with the student's behavior he would eventually teach him. Sometimes the lessons were so subtle that the student didn't realize what he had learned until long after he had left the teacher. The first time he was forced to defend himself he would find that all needed reactions just naturally seemed to appear.

Bruce said that another reason for the decline in Gung Fu is the Chinese custom of never giving anyone the knife to use to cut your throat. In Gung Fu this means that you never teach anyone all that you know. This tendency to hold back things from the students resulted in several of the better techniques going to the grave with the teachers. Bruce figured that this constant holding back over the years had weakened all of the styles. The teacher's primary reason for holding back was to protect himself when he grew old. It may seem strange to people today that a teacher of martial arts would have to protect himself against his students, but there were several cases of teachers being attacked and killed by one of their students.

Careful screening didn't always reveal the bad side of a student until long after he had started to learn the system. In the old days when a bad student went on the rampage it was the duty of the teacher to stop him. In those days a student represented his teacher in all aspects of his life. If the student did something wrong the teacher lost face. Loss of face was regarded as a fate worse than death and no Gung Fu teacher could allow any of his students to put him in such a position.

When a student was foolish enough to do something that made his teacher look bad, he generally felt that he could beat him in a fight or that he didn't have to worry about his teacher coming after him. Sometimes the student was right and the people in the area caught hell until he was finally disposed of. Most of the time the teacher was the winner because of the secret techniques that he had held back. Bruce referred to this teacher intervention as taking back the Gung Fu. He said that teachers seldom killed their students, they just tore their tendons and ligaments so that they were walking reminders to others of what could happen when a student didn't obey his teacher's wishes.

It is hard to realize today how powerful a weapon Gung Fu was in the old days. There were no guns during this period, and Gung Fu men were masters of all other weapons that existed. The knowledge gave them tremendous power, which most of them sought to place in the right hands.

Most of the teachers kept a clan record book that contained all of the clan's secrets. When a teacher was ready to retire he would pass the book on to his successor. If the person that the teacher had picked was not a very good fighter, the material that he passed on would make him equal of any one in the clan. Sometimes teachers waited too long before they selected a successor and the clan would split into warring groups, with each faction claiming to be the legal representative of the clan. This usually happened when the teacher died before picking a successor.

The rules that applied to the Western gunfighter often applied to the old Gung Fu masters. If someone defeated a master in combat, he was instantly famous. Several of the top masters rented their names to caravans as protection. These caravans displayed banners showing that they were traveling under the protection of master so and so. This was another spur to would be challengers because defeat of a master gave them his position as protector of caravans.

Bruce said that all teachers had one student who they taught just to deal with the challenges that might come from other Gung Fu men. The challenge system was set up so that a challenger had to go through a teacher's students before he would fight him. One reason for this approach

was that it provided the teacher with an opportunity to study the techniques of the challenger. If he had to fight he would have some idea of the way that he should defend and attack. Another reason that the challenger had to fight students first was to prove himself worthy to fight the teacher. If a challenger wasn't a worthy opponent, and the teacher fought him it would be a loss of face for the teacher. In the old days the clan went all out to protect the teacher because he was a living representation of the style.

Bruce said that a lot of Wing Chun's techniques were based on the founders observation of a fight between a fox and a wounded eagle. The eagle faced the fox with its talons held pointing at the Fox's muzzle. When the fox attacked, the eagle would claw it on the nose. The fox kept trying to get around the talon, but the eagle kept turning to face the fox, and it couldn't get in. Finally a badly battered fox limped off to find easier prey, and an enlightened human walked away with a new concept upon which to build a fighting system. Wing Chun started with the concept of pointing the lead hand toward the opponent's nose and developed one of the best hand fighting styles in the world.

I spent the first six months that I knew Bruce working with him on some adjustment problems that he was having. In Hong Kong he had a lot of status and was quite well known. In this country he was just another face. His lack of status in this country was something that bothered him, and the two of us spent a lot of time working it out. Bruce also had a problem with the language. He had learned to speak English in Hong Kong, but wasn't able to think well in the language. He had to translate all English to Chinese when he was thinking and retranslate it to English when he spoke. Sometimes the translation would jam up and he wasn't able to speak. Bruce was afraid that this might happen in one of his school classes. If someone laughed at him when it happened he was afraid that he might explode and attack them. I told him over and over that all he had to do to be a successful speaker was to act the same way that he had acted in Hong Kong. I told him to take things slow and easy when he was talking, and not to anticipate trouble.

Sometimes we would talk about life in Hong Kong as it compared to life in America. Most of these conversations centered around psychology and street survival. I spent time building up his confidence in these areas and he spent time teaching me Gung Fu and its underlying philosophy. One of the major problems that I helped him with was the problem of standing in front of a group and giving a speech. Bruce said that whenever he gave a speech he found himself locked in a staring contest with someone. As the speech progressed the staring became more intense until it was like an open challenge. He had to exercise a lot of self-control in order not to go over and punch the person. I told him that he could break this habit if he picked a spot to look at in the back of the room over the heads of three different people. I had him pick a spot on the left side of the room, one in the center of the room, another on the right side of the room, and told him to move his head back and forth from spot to spot as though he were scanning the audience. Bruce followed my suggestion and I never heard him complain again about making speeches in front of crowds. Once Bruce overcame his problems with speaking in front of an audience he was always looking for a chance to talk to people rather than shying away from them.

Sometimes our talks centered on the things that we both wanted out of life. Bruce wanted to be famous, rich, and the best Gung Fu man in the world. I wanted to be free to do whatever I wanted to do, and to be happy. Bruce accepted my position up to a point, but we always went round and round about money and its importance. Sometimes I would purposely bait him by saying that the things that money can buy aren't very important or necessary to a good life. Bruce would get so mad that all he could do was walk around shaking his head shouting, "You're crazy, you're crazy!" When I still wouldn't change my position he would try to enlist the support of whoever happened to be around. It never made any difference to me how many people agreed with him, I always maintained my position that money wasn't essential to a good life. No matter how heated the arguments were we always ended up friends after they were over.

Back to the beginning. After my roommate Ed Hart began to practice he wrote a letter to another friend, Howard Hall and told him about Bruce. Howard was one of the people that I had gone to California with to look for a karate school. He was coming back to Seattle in a few months and wanted us to put in a good word for him with Bruce. By this time Bruce, Ed and I were pretty tight friends. Ed had helped Bruce with a lot of his school papers, and when he asked him about Howard he said that the fact that he was a friend of ours was good enough for him. He said that he would be happy to teach him along with the rest of us.

Leroy Porter who had first told me about the James Lee book was the next guy to join the group. I told him that Bruce wanted to start a club and he said that he would like to meet him, so I set it up. Bruce liked him and he was in.

The next guy who came along was Pat C. Hooks. I met him at the downtown Y.M.C.A., and we got into a discussion about martial arts. Pat was a Blackbelt in Judo, and he asked me if there was a club in town where he could workout. I told him to go to Seattle Dojo. When Pat was stationed in the Philippines he had learned a little Gung Fu. He told me that getting into the club had taken a lot of doing. He said the only reason that he got in was because he had a friend on the Manila police force. Pat's friend was owed a favor by a man who taught Gung Fu, and when he had asked him to teach Pat he was unable to refuse. After the man let Pat into the school he did everything in his power to drive him out. He cuffed him around during the practice sessions and was always challenging him to fight. Sometimes he would taunt him with, "Wouldn't you like to hit me? Come on, why don't you try?" Pat would always reply, "You must think I'm crazy."

The harder the man tried to get rid of him the more determined Pat was to stay. When the Chinese students in the class screwed up they had to kneel on rock salt with their bare knees. The weight of their bodies would cause the salt to work its way into their flesh, and it would hurt like hell. Pat said that he somehow managed to avoid this part of the training, and when he screwed up the teacher would look at him as though there wasn't much more that you could expect from a dumb American.

One of the things that the club practiced a lot was knife fighting with live blades. The knife point and the edge were exposed and the rest of the blade was covered with tape. Pat had an arm full of scars to show for all the

wrong moves that he had made during knife practice. He had stuck with the Gung Fu club until he left the islands. Pat said that he hadn't learned a hell of a lot while he was there, but that he had stayed because of the teacher's insistence that he leave.

When I spoke to Bruce about Pat he had me bring him to one of our practice sessions. Bruce and Pat hit it off well and Pat became a member of the group. Bruce started talking about renting a place and starting a formal club, and the group talked about ways to attract people. They decided that the best way to go about it would be to put on Gung Fu demonstrations. We hoped that the demonstrations would attract the kind of people that we wanted in the club.

Charlie Woo, the man who told me about Bruce's first demonstration, asked me if I would introduce him to Bruce. I brought him to one of the practice sessions and Bruce liked him. The first demonstration that we put on was at Edison Tech High School, the place where Bruce and I attended school. The school was having an assembly and one of the teachers suggested to Bruce that he put on a demonstration as part of the program. The demonstration was part Judo and part Gung Fu. We were afraid that few people would be able to relate to Gung Fu by itself. The year was 1960 and few Americans had heard of Gung Fu, but everyone knew what Judo was, and we were banking on it being the drawing card. Another Judo friend, Skip Ellsworth, the third person to join the group, took part in the first demonstration. Ed Hart was the narrator, and Pat, Skip, and I did the judo. The Gung Fu was done by Bruce and I. We did two forms each. I did a form from the Hung, and one from Wing Chun. Bruce did a form from the Southern Mantis, and one from the Sil Lum. He also gave a demonstration of self-defense against a series of attacks that I made against him.

Bruce concluded the demonstration with a talk on the different styles of Gung Fu. He talked about distance, and demonstrated styles that attacked from long and short range. Bruce also talked about hard and soft styles and gave examples of both. During his discussion about the merits of the hard and soft styles Bruce said that it was usually held in Gung Fu that the soft styles were superior to the hard styles. One of the people in the audience was a karateman who took offense to the idea that the soft styles were superior. He made up his mind then and there that he was going to prove to Bruce that he was a better martial artist. His downfall was that Bruce never demonstrated his own style in those days, and the karateman thought that Bruce fought with the same kind of flowery techniques that he had demonstrated. The techniques that Bruce demonstrated looked pretty, but they weren't very strong or fast. Bruce didn't know it at the time, but he was going to see a lot of this Karateman over the next few months, and one day he was going to give the man a chance to test his skill.

The demonstration was a success and we picked up a couple of the kind of people that we were looking for. Jim Demile and Leroy Garcia were the new additions to the club. Demile had been an Air Force boxing champion, and Garcia had been a boxer and a wrestler. Both men tried to penetrate Bruce's defense but neither one of them was able to, even though they both outweighed him by eighty pounds.

In 1960 Bruce was working at the Seattle Times stuffing Sunday newspapers. Demile and I would sometimes go to work with him so that he



could finish early, and we could go practice.

Bruce was 19 and much of his conversation was about the kind of dreams that most 19 year old martial artists have. He talked about training each member of the group so that they would be able to go to some other city and start a branch school. He would talk for hours about how great it would be to be the head of a system and travel from city to city checking on the way that his method was being taught. Bruce was still enthusiastic about the promotion of all styles of Gung Fu and he often talked about the slyness of the monkey style, the strong punching and footwork of the Hung, the tearing grips of the Eagle Claw, the nervous energy of the Southern Mantis, the smooth kicks of the Northern Mantis and Jeet Kune and the effective swings of the Choy Li Fut. He was well into the modification of classical lines in systems, but he still spoke well of forms, and was entranced with the concept of grace and beauty in the Chinese fighting arts. One of the reasons he liked the way that Pat Hooks moved was because he said that Pat moved with a lot of Chinese style. When questioned about what he meant, Bruce said that Pat moved like a Gung Fu Man. This was long before he started to look closely at the basis of other styles, and he still believed in many of the same myths that he was later to turn so violently against.

Bruce was then a strange mixture of dreams and reality. His speech was always full of mystical references, but his actions were geared toward the functional. When Bruce talked about how other styles compared with Wing Chun he said that two years of Wing Chun was the equivalent of five years of another style. He still maintained the idea that some masters of every style were far beyond the skills of the people in his own style, and he believed that the soft styles were the best. He felt strongly that the secrets of Gung Fu were deeply locked in the soft arts and that a philosophical study of them could reveal the path to success.

Bruce read books every day searching for the mystical key that would open the gates to the understanding that he wanted so badly. He was always talking about the mystical powers of Ging (internal strength), and claimed that Ging was seated in the pit of the stomach, and that it could be trained to flow through the arms and legs in ways that increased the power of strikes. He showed me a book on poison hands and told me that he would like very much to meet and talk to the author. He seemed to favor the belief that poison hands, and the delayed death touch might exist, and he also had a strong belief in Chinese medicine which he often used on his hands.

Bruce talked to me during this period about Mongolian wrestling, a system of Chinese Jiu Jitsu, and the Book of Changes. He spent hundreds of hours exploring the Book of Changes, and felt that it contained all of mankind's secrets. In 1960 Bruce was a strong believer in forms, and he decided that each of us was going to learn a different form so that we could show the vastness of the art of Gung Fu. He always emphasized the importance of doing forms correctly, and believed that the forms contained something that led to the creation of speed and power. He talked a lot about creating his own system of forms, and a lot of the techniques that he taught me in our private sessions were in the structure of forms. Less than a year later Bruce reversed his position and began to downgrade any system that emphasized forms.

After the first demonstration we started to train hard for the ones that were to follow. I was still practicing Judo at the Y with Ed, and after every practice session I would spend an hour on the Hung form that I was learning from Bruce. I was a very long form and it took me several hours of practice before I was able to do it the way that Bruce wanted it done. Something Bruce would practice at the Y with us, but he would restrict himself to working on Judo throws. He didn't like the idea of someone he didn't know watching him practice Gung Fu.

The Karateman who held a secret grudge against Bruce also practiced at the Y, and I played Judo against him many times. At that time I didn't know that he was a Karateman, or that he wanted to fight Bruce. What I did know about him was that he was a blackbelt in Judo, and that it really made him angry that I, a first degree brownbelt, could throw him all over the place. He always claimed that the reason that I could throw him was because I was stronger than he was. My response to this line of reasoning was to drive him into the mat with every throw I knew.

Two other blackbelts who practiced at the Y were Tak Miyabi and Masafusa Kimura. One day when I was at the Y with Bruce, Masafusa happened along. Bruce was practicing a form when he entered the room and Masafusa was curious about what he was doing. Bruce told him that he was practicing Chinese boxing. Bruce mentioned that he was teaching Chinese boxing to a group of people and Masafusa asked if he might join the group. Bruce told him to come to the next practice session. Tak Miyabi happened to watch us work out one day, and he asked Bruce if it would be possible for him to workout with us. Both these blackbelts were students from Japan, and they attended the same high school that Bruce and I attended.

The next demonstration that Bruce did was with Fook Young on T.V. Both men did several precision forms which were beautiful to watch. I was really surprised at the way that Fook Young could move out of a low horse stance. Most of his attacks were directed toward the groin and it was easy to see how difficult it would be to counter his moves. Bruce did his usual Sil Lum form and one from the Jeet Kune.

The next demonstration that involved the whole group was held at the Yesler Terrace gym. Bruce drew up some hand bills telling of the coming event and we spread them all over Capitol Hill. We had really prepared well for the demonstration and each of us had something different to show the audience. We were all committed to putting on a good show, and demonstrating the effectiveness of Gung Fu. Once again we had included Judo because of its familiarity to the public. Ed Hart explained to the audience what Judo and Gung Fu were, and gave them a brief description of what we hoped to demonstrate. We began with Judo breakfalls, moved to randori (free practice), did some self-defense, and concluded the Judo demonstration with different kinds of throws. Jim Demile, Pat Hooks, and I did part of the Judo, and Ed Hart and Howard Hall did the rest.

The stage that we were demonstrating on was hollow underneath and it made the person who was thrown sound as if they were being killed. Jim's mother was sitting in the front row and the first time that I threw him he made such a loud noise that his mother jumped straight out of her chair fearful that I had really hurt her son. When the Judo was over we all did our Gung Fu forms.

Skip started the Gung Fu with a form from the Sil Lum, Leroy did a form from the Wah Kune, Jim did one called the Beggars Form, I did one from the Hung, Howard did one that I can't remember the name of, and Bruce did one from the Southern praying Mantis. Leroy Garcia had a habit of forgetting his form about half way through it, but he would always improvise some fill-in moves so quickly that the audience never knew that he was doing his own thing. Leroy was always worried about how he looked whenever this happened, but his moves always looked as though they were part of the form.

Bruce and I did some attacking and defending, and the crowd was really impressed with the way that he moved. Bruce was really into flashy techniques and he concluded the fighting sequence with a dazzling technique called the three lightning chops of Wing Chun. He wanted to show the audience the kind of power that was involved in his art so he brought his wooden dummy. (A training device that is used in Wing Chung to sharpen techniques and develop power). We rigged a stand on the stage so that Bruce could attack the dummy with full force. When he attacked the Dummy the six of us who were holding it found ourselves flying all over the stage. Our combined weight and strength wasn't enough to effectively brace the dummy against the power of Bruce's punches. Bruce ended the demonstration with a form from the Jeet Kune and the crowd went wild, that is all but two of the people.

The Karateman from the first demonstration and a stupid friend that he had brought with him. After the demonstration the Karateman sent his friend over to issue a challenge to Bruce. Bruce came down to the locker room and told us about the challenge. He asked us if he should fight the guy and how we felt about the challenge. We told him that he didn't have to prove anything to us and that it was beneath his dignity to accept the challenge. Bruce seemed to be happy with the knowledge that none of us would think less of him for not accepting the challenge, and we sat around for a few minutes talking about the way that we had been received by the audience. We left the locker room happy that the demonstration had gone so well and were anxious to put on the next one.

During the days that followed the demonstration the Karateman made himself more and more obnoxious at school. Every morning he would stand in the lounge and leer at Bruce from across the room. Whenever Bruce looked in his direction he would sneer and gesture with his head for Bruce to come over and fight. Bruce demonstrated tremendous control. The Karateman got in his way when he walked down the hall, but Bruce would just smile and walk around him. Other Gung Fu men started telling Bruce that if he didn't fight the Karateman they would. They claimed that his refusal to fight was an insult to Chinese Gung Fu. Bruce told them that he wasn't going to allow them or anyone else to prod him into a fight. I can't remember the exact number of days that Bruce put up with the Karateman's insults, but it was a long time.

One day when I came out of class Bruce was standing there so angry that he could hardly speak. I asked him what was wrong, and he said that he was going to fight the SOB, and he wanted me to be his second. I said, "Let's go!", and we started toward the lounge. On the way, Bruce filled me in on what had happened. He had walked into the lounge and our old friend

the Karateman had sent over a fool with the following message. "If Bruce wanted to go to the hospital just walk over to where he was." This was the straw that broke the camel's back. The guy had pushed too far and Bruce had but a single thought; to cave his head in. We reached the basement and were approaching the lounge when Bruce told me that he wanted to fight right away on the third floor of the school. I let the idea roll around in my head and decided that it wasn't a good place to fight. I told him that I didn't think that fighting at school was a good idea, and that we could get expelled. Bruce said that he hadn't considered this possibility because he was too angry to wait. I told him that a much better place to fight would be at the downtown Y.M.C.A. If anyone came in during the fight we could always say that it was a friendly match. He agreed that it sounded like the best idea.

Bruce was so angry that he didn't trust himself to go into the lounge. He asked me if I would make the arrangements for the fight, and I said that I would. Bruce said that he would wait for me on the top floor, and I set out to find the Karateman and ask him if he was willing to fight at the Y. Bruce had told me to ask the man about fighting at the Y, and that if he wasn't willing to fight there to tell him that he should come to the top floor prepared to fight.

I found the Karateman in the lounge and I asked him about fighting at the Y. He said that the Y.M.C.A. sounded okay to him. I told him to bring some of his friends with him and to meet us in front of the school in an hour. After everything was arranged I set out with Bruce to find Ed Hart and Howard Hall. Bruce told them about the coming fight and we went to the bus stop in front of the school to wait for the Karateman and his friends. We stood there talking about the upcoming fight for ten minutes before the Karateman showed up with two of his friends. One of the friends was Masafusa Kimura, one of the people who had been working out with us at the Y. The Karateman said that Bruce had insulted him and his country by saying that soft styles are better than hard styles.

Two weeks before the fight I had asked the Karateman what his reason was for wanting to fight Bruce and he told me that Bruce had insulted Karate by saying that it wasn't any good because it was a hard style. I told the man that Bruce hadn't mentioned Karate and that he didn't even know what it was. It became apparent during the conversation that the man wanted to fight Bruce and that this was the real issue. I always felt that the man was set up by some of his supposed friends who were curious about how Karate would do against Gung Fu.

There was electricity in the air at the bus stop when the Karateman and his group walked up, and for a moment I thought the fight was going to happen right there. Bruce kept looking away in an effort to control his anger and the Karateman kept moving into Bruce's line of vision in an attempt to break down his confidence. I was a very happy man when the bus arrived because the tension in Bruce was increasing and I felt that he could explode at any moment. We got on the bus, and the Karateman sat on the long side seat in front of Bruce. He started to talk about what kind of rules the fight was going to follow, but his manner was so abrasive that Bruce finally told him to forget the rules because he was going all out. Bruce was so angry that I thought he was going to burst a blood vessel. I could see that it was taking every bit of his self-control not to leap on his opponent right there on the bus. I finally told the man that I didn't think that he should talk to Bruce

any more and that we were moving to another part of the bus. I told him that we could talk more about the rules when we got to the Y. I spent the rest of the trip downtown calming Bruce down and getting him to agree not to go all out.

When we reached the Y, Bruce, Ed, Howard and I went straight to the handball court. Bruce tested his shoes on the floor and decided that he was going to fight bare footed. He took off his shirt and was standing there in his undershirt when the Karateman walked in. Bruce did a couple of deep knee bends and stood there waiting for the thing to get started. The Karateman had changed into his Karate gi and was going through a series of limbering up exercises. When he stopped limbering up Bruce asked him if he was sure that he wanted to fight. The Karateman said, "Ya, ya, ya." Bruce asked him if he was the one who had pushed for the fight and again he said, "Ya, ya, ya." Bruce said, "All right," and it was time for the fight to begin. I went over the rules that had been agreed upon and double checked to make sure that both parties were in agreement as to the way the fight was to be handled. While the Karateman was upstairs changing into his gi I had talked Bruce into using conventional blows, because I was afraid he might kill the man if he went all out.

The rules of the fight were as follows: three two-minute rounds with the winner being the man who won two of the three rounds. Winning a round was based on knocking a man down or out. If for some reason one man wasn't able to continue, the other man was to be declared the winner. I was the referee and Bruce's second and Ed Hart was the time keeper. I asked them if they were ready to go and they both said yes. I started the match by saying ready, set, go. Bruce stood in a relaxed Wing Chun stance with his right foot forward and his lead hand pointing toward the Karateman's nose. Bruce's other hand was pointing up toward the ceiling at a position three inches from the elbow of his leading arm. The Karateman started out in the classical Karate stance with one leg extended behind him and the other slightly in front of him. One hand was facing Bruce with the palm out. The other hand was in the form of a fist, held at his waist. From this position he switched to the cat stance and attacked with the lead foot.

The kick was aimed slightly above the groin and it was deflected by Bruce's forearm. The kick was very fast and it just barely touched Bruce's undershirt. The same instant that Bruce deflected the kick to the side with his right forearm his left fist struck the man in the face. The left punch was quickly followed by a series of straight punches to the Karateman's face. Every time Bruce's fists struck the Karateman's face it looked as though it was being distorted by the force of gravitational pull. Bruce punched the man all the way across the handball court and didn't get hit once. The Karateman was punching back at Bruce while he was being driven across the floor, but all his punches were deflected off Bruce's forearms. Bruce had the center line covered and the man couldn't penetrate his defense. Bruce punched the man into the wall and he tried to grab Bruce's arms. Bruce responded to the man's attempts to grab him with a doublefist punch. One of the punches hit the man's face, and the other punch hit his chest. He did the double punch off of a waist turn and the punches had so much power that they lifted the man completely off the floor and sent him flying six feet through the air. As the man flew through the air Bruce was moving across

the floor after him. The instant that the Karateman's knee hit the floor was the same instant that Bruce's foot found his nose. When the kick landed I saw blood squirt from the guy's nose like the hot breath from an angry bull. I screamed for them to stop and Bruce broke off his attack.

The Karateman was laying on the floor in the middle of the handball court looking for all the world like he was dead. Racing through my mind was the realization that I had never seen a person so completely destroyed in a short period of time. I was afraid that if the man wasn't dead that he was dying, and I was hoping that no one would come in while he was lying there unable to move. When I walked up to the man he was just starting to move and I was grateful that he was still alive. His face looked as though he had been beaten with a baseball bat. The left side was so swollen that I couldn't see his eye, and the right side didn't look much better. The first thing he asked was how long he lasted. Ed had told me that the fight had lasted about 11 seconds but he didn't have the heart to tell the man the truth so he told him that the fight had lasted 22 seconds.

I thought the guy was crazy when he told Bruce that he wanted a rematch. He claimed that he had not been in training and that he wanted to fight again. Bruce told him that he hadn't wanted to fight him in the first place and that he didn't see any point in fighting him a second time. Bruce said that as far as he was concerned he was never going to talk about what had happened to anyone else. Contrary to what many people claim today, that Bruce went around looking for a chance to show someone up, here he was trying to make the guy who had been tormenting him for the last few months feel like it was no big thing that he had lost a fight that he had insisted on having. When we left the Y.M.C.A. I was really proud of Bruce. He had won the fight and had shown his opponent kindness when it was over. Bruce made us promise that we wouldn't talk about the fight to outsiders. Word of the fight finally leaked out, but it wasn't from one of us. The way the fight progressed showed me that I was really going to have to work hard in order to measure up to Bruce.



*Illustration by Mike Lee*

## Chapter Six

Two other people who later came into the group were Taky Kimura, and John Jackson. I knew both of these guys through Judo and when Ed and I told them about the things that Bruce could do they were both eager to meet him. They were both the kind of people who would add to any group and when Ed and I introduced them to Bruce he found them readily acceptable.

The first school that we had was in an old building on the corner of Maynard and Lane in Seattle. The place cost us a hundred dollars a month, and it worked out that each of us had to pay ten dollars a month. Bruce was the teacher and there were ten of us student charter members. The plan was that we would never have to pay more than the ten dollars a month toward the rent. Anyone joining the club after it's start had to pay whatever Bruce wanted to charge. Each new member had to be brought in by a member of the charter group or Bruce; and anyone of us could reject anyone that we didn't like. Bruce had the final say so on who could come in, but he placed a lot of faith in the judgement of the charter members. One of the long range objectives of the school was to provide Bruce with a non menial way to support himself.

Sometimes Bruce would ask me to go along with him to his job at the *Seattle Times* to keep him company. These times were a continuation of my learning experience because Bruce spent the whole time talking about different aspects of Gung Fu. Sometimes after he finished work we would go down to Chinatown and watch a movie.

The first Gung Fu movie that I ever saw was about a Gung Fu man who was like the Lone Ranger. He traveled all over China righting wrongs that were done to the common man. Bruce translated the movie for me and the plot read like a poor Western. A village was being controlled by a rogue Gung Fu man who could beat up anyone in the town. He had taken over everything that was of value and made the people do his bidding.

I was amazed at the way that the actors could jump over walls with little effort and asked Bruce if people could really do that kind of thing. He said that there were Gung Fu men who could do all kinds of fantastic things, but that he didn't think that anyone could jump higher than 5 or 6 feet. (On other occasions he did talk about Gung Fu masters who would issue challenges from a seven foot high stage to fight anyone who could jump onto the stage). Bruce said that the movie hero had really lived and that he had been a member of the Hung style. The man who played the villain in the movie was a living Gung Fu man that I'm sure many of you have seen as Mr. Han, the villain in the movie "Enter the Dragon". His double kick was so good that it influenced Bruce to practice the same move. Bruce later developed the move so well that all you could see when he moved was a blur.

The movie left me with a poor impression of Chinese movies because the plot and the filming didn't hold together very well. Part of the film looked as though they had just spliced it together and with little regard for the audience, scenes would change when they weren't supposed to and there were several visible flaws in the film. I did enjoy the fight scenes between the hero and the villain, and thought that it funny that the villain's moves



were real, while the hero's were fake. The hero and the villain began their final fight with their hands and later switched to weapons. After a long drawnout fight scene the movie ended with the hero defeating the villain, and converting him to follow the right path. The last scene of the movie showed the hero walking off into the sunset to right some more wrongs.

After we left the movie we spent a couple of hours at the Tia Tung restaurant talking about it. Bruce said that in real life the master had never been bested, and that he had been feared throughout the land. Bruce's conversation about this master led me to believe that he too would have been happy to have spent the rest of his life doing the same kind of thing.

Sometimes Bruce talked about his acting career in Hong Kong and the kind of roles that he played. He said that Chinese actors were paid much less than actors in the U.S., and that the best people got less than six thousand Hong Kong dollars for making an entire film. The plots were a lot simpler than those of our Western movies, and they were usually shot in two or three days. Bruce had been in several movies and the role that he liked best was that of a juvenile delinquent. In one of the films Bruce had made, the climax had been when he lost an ear. Bruce said that this dramatic scene had caused old ladies to cry when the film was shown in Hong Kong. He said that he could make about thirty thousand U.S. dollars a year if he returned to the Hong Kong film industry, but that he was staying in the U.S. because he thought that the opportunities here were greater. U.S. actors made more money and the plots were of a better quality.

The films that impressed Bruce the most were the Japanese Samurai films which we saw by the dozens. He loved the way that the better ones were laid out, particularly when the fighting scenes were kept within the realm of reality. Every time that we watched a poor Samurai movie you could hear Bruce's mild cursing all over the theater. I have seen all of Bruce's Gung Fu movies several times and I'm certain that they were strongly influenced by the Samurai films that we saw in Seattle.

Bruce was, in a lot of ways, a clown and he liked to do impersonations of different kinds of people. The dumb repairman in the movie "The Chinese Connection" was an impression that I had seen him do at least a hundred times. He would pull in his shoulders, lean back, stick out his teeth, and pull his glasses down on his nose, and walk around like he was slow in the head. The role of the gay man in "The Return of the Dragon" was something else that I saw him do many times.

Bruce had several pairs of contact lens that were different colors and he often wore them as a practical joke. One pair was bright red, one pair had large red veins on them, and another pair were clouded like the eyes of someone blind. Bruce liked to wear the blind pair to the ticket office of movie theaters when he purchased a ticket and note the surprise on the face of the cashier. Bruce's taste in American movies ran toward Jerry Lewis movies. So whenever we went to see American movies we often got into arguments about the kind of picture that we were going to see because I hated comedies. Sometimes we would end up going to separate shows, and other times one of us would give into the wishes of the other.

Bruce's favorite drink was rootbeer and any place that we went to that didn't serve it was unlikely to see Bruce's face again. He also chewed lots and lots of gum. He went through about four packs a day and I finally



From left to right, Skip Ellsworth, Jesse Glover and Bruce Lee at the 1961 World Trade Fair.



The author and Bruce clowning around.

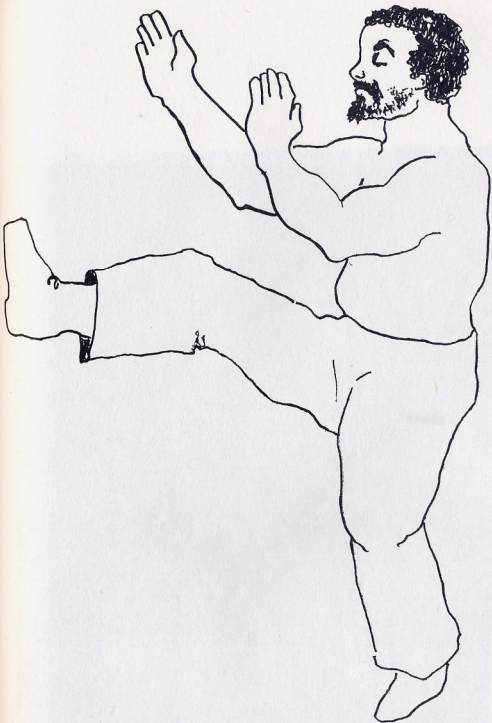


Fig. III. Shows an upward thrust of the hands and a kick to the groin or knee. This was Bruce's favorite response to an attack in 1959.



Standing from left to right Pat Hooks, Bruce Lee, Ed Hart, and the author. Kneeling from left to right are Taky Kimura, Charlie Woo, and Leroy Porter.



Bruce in the Wing Chun stance.



From left to right the author, Bruce Lee, Ed Hart, and standing in the rear, Howard Hall.

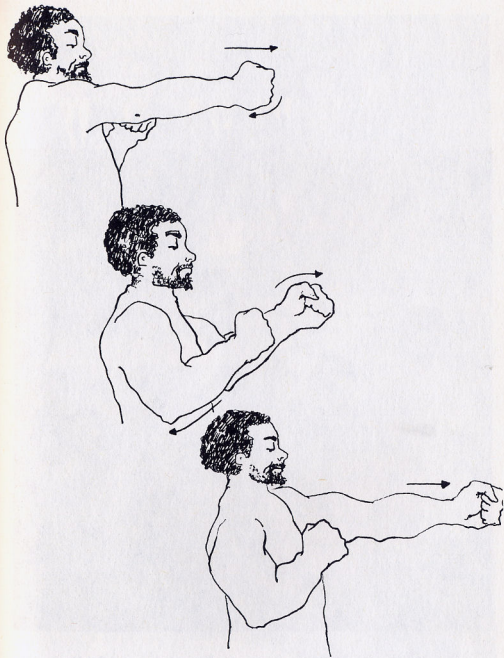


Fig. II. Shows the alternating punching that was one of the basic moves of Bruce's earlier style. Both fists are thrown at the opponent's head in a long oval shaped pattern one after the other until he is down and out.

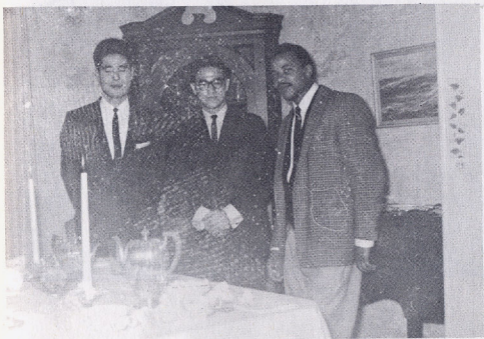




From left to right the author, Bruce Lee, Howard Hall, and Pat Hooks.



From left to right Masafusa Kimura, unknown Judo player. Ron Mackee, Fred Sato, the author, Bruce Lee, and Skip Elsworth. Kneeling is Ed Hart.



From left to right Masafusa Kimura, Bruce Lee, and the author.

# TUO AND GXNG FU (CHINESE MARTIAL ART) DEMONSTRATION

PLACE :— YESLER TERRACE GYMNASIUM  
(AT THE FOOT OF BROADWAY ON YESLER)  
TIME :— 8 P. M.  
DATE :— 28 Oct, 1960 (FRIDAY)

国術  
柔道  
表演



NO  
ADMISSION  
CHARGE

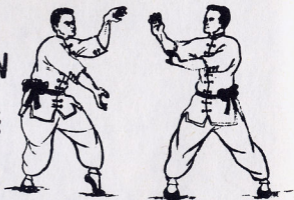


Fig. IV. The poster is one that was done in 1960 by Bruce for one of our demonstrations.



Standing from left to right Masafusa Kimura, Ed Hart and Bruce Lee.  
Standing in a stance the author. Kneeling from left to right Skip Elsworth, Ron Mackee, and an unknown Judo player.



Bruce Lee in an Eagle Claw stance.



Bruce going through a form.



Standing from left to right Pat Hooks, Bruce Lee, Ed Hart, and the author. Kneeling from left to right are Taky Kimura, Charlie Woo, and Leroy Porter.



Fig. 1. This is one response to an incoming punch. The fingers are thrust toward the opponent's eyes and any slowing or stopping of this forward movement is met with an upward thrust of the elbow which will deflect the opponent's fist.



From top to bottom, the author, Bruce Lee, Howard Hall, and Pat Hoo'ks.





Bruce in the middle of a form.

became so curious about it that I asked him why he chewed so much gum. He answered by opening his mouth and showing me a large cavity in one of his back teeth. I asked him why he didn't go to the dentist and have it fixed, and he told me that he didn't like dentists. He said that as long as he kept chewing gum his mouth tasted clean and the tooth didn't hurt him. I told him scary tales of what it would be like if the tooth broke until he finally went to the dentist and got it filled.

Since eating was one of Bruce's favorite pastimes, the entire club spent hundreds of hours at different Chinese restaurants in Seattle's International District. Before it became popular, we spent a lot of time at the Tai Tung. Whenever it was full we went to the Baby Three Grands, Lin Yin, Gim Ling, or the Atlas Cafe, Bruce thought that the Yin Lin made the best oyster sauce beef and that it gave more than an adequate serving. The best place for tomato beef was the Three Grands, and the Gim Ling had the best Chinese pastry. Bruce's favorite eating place was the Atlas Cafe, but we didn't go there often because the old man who ran the place was really independent, and sometimes it took a long time to get waited on. When we were in a good mood and didn't mind waiting we would go to the Atlas because the food was fantastic. The outstanding features of the Tai Tung was that the food was cheap, good, and they had wider selection than the other restaurants.

Sometimes when we went downtown to eat, Bruce would pretend that he was the son of the Chinese Ambassador to the U.S. Bruce would act like he couldn't speak English and Howard, Ed and I would pretend to translate his wishes to the waitress who was always attentive because she assumed (and rightly so) that she was going to get a good tip. It was funny to watch the quick change in people when they found out that Bruce was someone important, and his restaurant game led me to suspect that Bruce was a man who really wanted to be famous.

Bruce's Gung Fu instructions taught me how to put concepts together and how he thought. Once I understood his thinking, it became easy for me to understand his Gung Fu concepts even though I didn't have the physiology to put many of them into practice. One of Bruce's favorite sayings was that he had given me the pieces, but that I was going to have to provide my own basic structure. In the last few years I have come to realize that he also gave me a large part of the structure upon which to place these pieces. All that remains for me to do is to carry his concepts to their logical conclusion.

Bruce's martial arts interests were not restricted to Gung Fu. He learned a lot about Judo from Fred Sato and myself, and he once enrolled in a formal Judo class at the University of Washington under Shuzo Kato, who was a U.S. national champion and one of my earlier Judo teachers. Fred Sato is now a football coach at Seattle's Rainier Beach High School and was one of Bruce's close friends. Bruce spent a lot of time at Fred's house and his conversations with Fred had a strong effect on the way that he thought after he came to this country. The Judo techniques that Bruce liked best were the footsweeps and trips that could be easily fitted into his Gung Fu. Bruce also liked to attend Judo matches, and he was really excited by the competition.

After three months of practice I was able to do the first part of the

Wing Chun form well enough that Bruce had me do it at our demonstrations. Bruce told me that in the classical Wing Chun clan beginning students had to practice the Sil Lum form for six months before they were allowed to practice anything else. Bruce had found this practice so distasteful that he had once considered giving up Wing Chun for the practice of a different method. The experience had left him with a bad feeling toward any method that was taught in a similar way. The only reason that he could see for this time consuming approach was to further test the trustworthiness of the student, and he felt that while this might have been a valid concept in the past, that it was out of step with the present. He felt that a student who wanted to learn how to hurt people would reveal himself in other ways, and the repetitious practice of the same movement for six months was an unnecessary method of detection. He also believed that a person whose primary aim was to assault other people wouldn't waste the time that it takes to develop the martial arts skill necessary to do it, they would simply go out and buy a weapon.

Bruce told me that the things that he was teaching me in the first three months were techniques that I wouldn't have learned in a formal clan for several years. Later when I had the opportunity to practice with classical Wing Chun people I could clearly see the logic of Bruce's method. I cannot claim to have worked out with the best Wing Chun men, but those I did practice with were unable to effectively counter my technique. The best that these people could come up with was to say that what I was doing violated all of the rules of the classical style and that it wasn't supposed to work. My answer to their criticisms was that a system should work under adverse conditions and not just conditions of their own making.

Sometimes Bruce would ask me strange questions like who did I think would win in a fight between me and my various friends. He always seemed surprised when I told him that the thought hadn't entered my mind, and that I couldn't picture a situation where I would fight a friend. Bruce would always look at me strangely and move on to another topic. Two or three times he asked me if I thought that I would stand a better chance fighting him with Gung Fu than I would without it. I told him that I didn't think that anything that I had learned would make a difference, and that I was surprised that he would ask such a question.

I was very fortunate to have met Bruce when I did. He was 18 and in need of a friend who could help sort out some of the adjustment problems that he was experiencing. He also needed a sounding board to work out his ideas on, and someone who was into the martial arts in a dedicated way to practice on and run around with. From 1959 to 1961 I felt that I knew Bruce better than anyone in the world. I'm sure that some of the confidences he shared with me, he shared with no one else. If I had met him a year after he had started to adjust to this country, I would have never got to know him as well as I did. We spent so much time together in 1960 and '61 that he would often lapse into Chinese, and ramble on for several minutes before it dawned on him that he wasn't getting a response. Whenever this happened he would say that it seemed as though I should be able to speak Chinese. He often tried to teach me the language but I wasn't interested. The few words that I did learn had to do with fighting. Bruce wanted to be able to tell me what to do from the side lines without my opponent understanding his instruction.

Bruce even wrote a letter to his teacher asking that I be allowed to become a formal member of the Wing Chun style. He never mentioned his teacher's reply so I always assumed that the reply was negative.

All of the people who have written about Bruce missed the extent of his involvement in putting Chinese things into a modern perspective. He was very proud of the fact that he was Chinese, and anything that put down the Chinese people was something that he was immediately against.

Bruce often talked about travelling to the mainland, and if during the course of his travels he happened to encounter someone who was better than him he would have immediately tried to become that person's student. If he didn't run into anyone better than himself he would have been happy to spend the rest of his life revitalizing Gung Fu. The only endorsement that he would have wished from the government was an indication that he was engaged in an activity that was beneficial to his people. Bruce was neither pro or anti communist, but he was very much pro-Chinese.

Bruce always expected some kind of trouble and one of my first lessons dealt with how to fight back to back without leaving my partner unprotected. He told me later that I had learned my lessons well and that he would trust me to be with him in a fight.

Bruce was entranced with the Gung Fu masters that he read about in some of the martial arts magazines. He often talked of a master known as the Iron Palm and showed me pictures of this master breaking 17 bricks. He said that another name for this master was the Swallow because of the graceful way that he could move. Later I saw the same picture on the cover of *Blackbelt* magazine.

Bruce's favorite among all of the old masters was the man he called the Golden Face Tiger. This master's death provided the basic plot in his movie "The Chinese Connection". Bruce said that this master had fought several people in and out of Gung Fu and that he had never lost a fight. He had defeated an 8th dan in Judo, with a single blow which broke his arm, and had also killed a Russian wrestler. His major aim in life had been to unite all Gung Fu under one system. He spent most of his adult life travelling around China persuading other masters to join his organization. His method of recruitment was both simple and direct, either join his group or fight him. His reputation was so great that he had few fights, but he never did succeed in his efforts to unify the art. Two of the schools that he did found are still in existence. One is located in Singapore and the other is somewhere on the mainland. Bruce said that their official name is the Ging Mo Institute.

Bruce first aspired to be like the masters that he read about. When he became knowledgeable about the actual skill levels of some of the current people who call themselves masters he grew very bitter toward them if their skill was less than his own. He never referred to himself as a master, and the only living person that I heard him refer to as a master was his teacher, Yip Man. The only other times that I heard him use the honorific term was in reference to someone who had lived in the past. He often talked about the mythical gate that one has to pass through to become a master. His own position in reference to the gate was that it was just coming into view, and that he still had a long way to go just to reach it much less pass through it.

In his quest to find a better way, Bruce left no stone unturned. He took techniques from Judo, Boxing, Wrestling, Savate, Fencing, Karate, and

other Gung Fu styles. His major criteria for using a technique was its feasibility. If he could make it work he would use it. If he couldn't make it work he would either discard it or set it aside to be tried again at a later date.

When he first came to Seattle Bruce told me that he was the sixth best person in the Wing Chun style, and that his greatest desire was to become number one. His major problem in accomplishing this goal was how to become more skillful than the five people who were above him by using the same techniques that they used. He realized that these people had taken years to reach their skill levels, and that he was going to have to develop modifications that circumvented their classical techniques. The first step that he took was to examine all of the boundaries that the style set up as being essential to its application. Then he took several of the things that were banned by the style and forged them into techniques that worked against the style's classical defense. He was able to do this because his high skill level in Wing Chun and his flexible thinking which allowed him to objectively study the weaknesses of the style's attacks and defenses.

Bruce believed that there is always someone who can beat you in a fight if the circumstances are right, and that to walk around thinking that you can't be beat is a foolish mistake that can end your life. Unfortunately this isn't a popular concept in the minds of many martial arts people. The path that Bruce followed was to live each day with the knowledge that he could be defeated by an expert or a novice at any given time.

People don't have to be as good as Bruce to follow his concepts, but they do have to be willing to make a lot of changes in their thinking and work hard for a number of years. Bruce did in Gung Fu what Oldfield did with the shot putt when he developed a new approach that resulted in a world record. Had Oldfield stuck to the old way of putting, it is doubtful that he would have ever developed the skill that led him to a world record. Now that it's become apparent to other shotputters that the same kind of gains are available to anyone using these new training methods several people are beginning to putt Oldfield's way with a great deal of success. Another example parallel to Bruce is the man who invented the flop as a way to clear the high bar. The man would have never established a world record if he had stuck to the traditional way of jumping. Now that he has opened the door several high jumpers are using his method.

It is extremely important that people be aware of the object of an activity. In shotputting the object is distance, in high jumping the object is clearing the bar, in fighting the object is to deliver your weapons in a way that prevents self injury. The object is **not** to deliver your weapons in some highly stylized manner.

Twice during the time that Bruce and I were close he returned to Hong Kong. Each time he was there he tested his increasing skill against the other members of the clan. The first time that he returned from Hong Kong Bruce told me that there were still three people who he couldn't get by — his teacher, his teacher's assistant, and Auh Hing. The second time that Bruce returned from Hong Kong he told me that he had stuck hands with Auh Hing and that he was able to push him around at will. Bruce said that his teacher had watched them play, and that Auh Hing had commented after it was over that Bruce if he kept improving might soon be as good as himself.

Bruce said that he had looked at Yip Man after Auh Hing had made his comment, and Yip Man had given him a look that told him that he was already as good and maybe even better.

Bruce said that when he stuck hands with his teacher he felt that he could finally score on him, but held back out of respect. Yip Man was happy that Bruce respected him enough not to press him, but he still resented his not trying and he knocked him about the room. After they had finished practicing Yip Man asked Bruce to sit down and tell him all the new things that he had learned about fighting. Bruce said that Yip Man's request was a real honor and it made him proud to be in possession of something his teacher wanted.

When he returned from his last trip to Hong Kong, Bruce felt that he had deviated so far from the classical concept of Wing Chun that he decided to rename what he was doing. The first name that he used was the Jan Fan method (which meant Bruce Lee method). Shortly after his return he changed his focus from becoming the best Wing Chun man in the world to becoming the best Gung Fu man in the world. Whether he achieved this goal or not is difficult to say, but I can say that he moved faster and hit harder than anyone I have ever seen. Bruce could move out of a stance faster than most people can run. In the early sixties he could close as fast as a top fencer, punch as hard as a good heavyweight boxer, had the strength of a top lightweight weightlifter, and was developing the flexibility of a good gymnast.

Bruce said that the success that the Wing Chun style had in fights was due to a fast close and straight punching. Bruce modified his Wing Chun close with some things that he took from fencing. He studied all of the fencing books that he could get his hands on and worked out the fastest possible close. Once he was sure of the basic move he practiced it thousands of times until he could do it better than anyone in the world.

One example of Bruce's closing speed was the way that he could get in on his brother Peter with a straight fencing lunge. Peter was the British Commonwealth fencing champion, but he was unable to stop Bruce's straight lunge. Bruce could have a person stand with their hand four inches from the side of their face, and close from a distance of seven feet and touch the side of their face before they could block his hand. I saw him demonstrate this skill several times and no one was ever able to react to his hand before it had returned to its starting position. His punch was so fast that your eyes couldn't pick up the movement. The only way that you could tell that he had punched in front of your face was by the wind that the punch created.

A friend of mine, Gary Barnhard, was at my house one day and we started talking about timing devices that could measure the speed of punches. Gary said that he had a timer at home that he would bring over if I wanted to measure the speed of reaction times. I told him that the timer would be fun to play with and he brought it over the next day. The first thing that I thought of was measuring Bruce's speed. I figured that Bruce would also be curious about his speed and gave him a call. He told me that he would be over the next day. The next afternoon Bruce Lee, Jim Demile, Gary Barnhard and I set out to test the timer.

The timer was hooked up to a light switch that activated it when the light was turned off. It was stopped by striking a pad with a cut off switch

behind it. Bruce tested his reactions several times and they were all around five hundreds of a second. Bruce's first punches were thrown from a distance of three feet. When he closed from five feet his reactions were slower but they were still around eight hundreds of a second. My own times from three feet were between 11 and 18 hundreds of a second. From a distance they were in the low twenties. Gary's times were quite a bit slower than mine, and Jim's were a bit faster, none of us were even close to Bruce.

There was a man at the University of Washington who was one of the world's best physiologists. A friend of mine, Ramon Reiser, told him about Bruce, and the man expressed an interest in using Bruce as a subject in an experiment on reaction times. He had a theory that certain people through training developed a way to beat the normal inhibitions that govern the speed with which the body can react. Ramon arranged for Bruce to meet the physiologist, but their meeting ended in a disagreement as to who was going to have their name on the experiment. The physiologist finally resolved the issue by saying that he was no longer interested in doing the experiment with Bruce. It's a pity that the experiments never happened because they would have resulted in documentation of the speed with which Bruce could move.

The power of Bruce's punch was one of the things that made him so formidable. When I first met him he had a six inch punch which could send someone a hundred pounds heavier flying through the air. His punch got stronger with practice and the distance that he could send a person flying increased as the distance that the punch could be delivered from decreased. Eventually he could get the same results by starting a punching with his fist held against you.

One day when Bruce was visiting, Ramon came to my house. I had told him about Bruce's one inch punch and he said that he couldn't see how anyone could get any power into a one inch punch. Later that night while we were standing outside Ramon asked Bruce about his punch, and said that he couldn't see how anyone could get power out of such a short punch. Bruce said that he would be happy to show him, and the next thing that Ramon knew he was up and over the hood of Bruce's car. Ramon said that it was quite an experience that he still remembers today. One minute he was on the ground; the next minute he was sitting on the hood of Bruce's car five feet away.

When I first met Bruce he was always testing the power of his punch by having me hold a pillow draped over my forearms which he would punch. I would hold my forearms together to form a backstop but no matter how hard I held them together his fist would always break through and send me crashing into the wall.

The same night that Bruce sent Ramon flying over the hood of his car was the same night that he showed us some movies he had brought back from Hong Kong. The movies showed Wing Chun students of Auh Hing fighting people from other styles. One of the fights was between a Wing Chun man and a man from the Preying Mantis, and the other fight was between a Wing Chun man and a man from the Choy Li Fut.

The first fight was on a rooftop, and the second fight was in the basement of a large building. When the first fight began, the Wing Chun man rushed in and knocked the Mantis man down. The Mantis man got up

(the Wing Chun man's punches were fast, but not very powerful) and the Wing Chun man rushed in and knocked him down for the second time. The Mantis man got up for the second time and the Wing Chun man punched him backwards until he was draped over a firewall. He was still punching the man about the head when the fight was stopped.

The second fight was better than the first because both contestants were stronger punchers. The fight began with each man waiting for the other to move. Finally the Choy Li Fut man attacked and the Wing Chun man backed out of range. The swings of the Choy Li Fut man were very strong and the Wing Chun man stayed on the defensive until his opponent over extended himself. The Choy Li Fut man made the mistake of pausing too long between moves and the Wing Chun man rushed in and straight punched him across the room and into one of the building's support pillars. The Choy Li Fut man was trapped against the pillar and the Wing Chun man kept punching him. The Choy Li Fut man's head was slammed against the post with every punch and he was bleeding from the nose and ears. Some of the onlookers finally jumped in and stopped the fight. The men in the film were beginners, but Bruce said that they should give me some idea of the effectiveness of the style. He said that Auh Hing had a lot of pride, and that he made sure that all of his students would stand and fight by forcing them to stand toe to toe and trade punches with boxing gloves.

Well back to Bruce's punch. One time when I was at Bruce's school in the University District I watched him send a 230 pound man flying through the air. My girl friend happened to be with me at the time and the impression of the man flying through the air is still in her mind. I hadn't been around Bruce for a long time, but I had been bragging to my girl friend about how fantastic he was. When she first saw 5'7½", 140 pound Bruce, all she could say was what's so great about him. When she saw the big man bounce off the wall her whole attitude changed. The man had a look of frozen terror on his face as he flew eight feet through the air and crashed into a wall. After his surprising experience the only thing that the man could say was, "I see, I see." Bruce had been sitting down when the man first approached him. He said that he had practiced Sil Lum Gung Fu, and that he couldn't see how Bruce could get any power the way that he punched. Bruce said that he would be happy to show him, and the next instant the man was bouncing off the wall.

During the next few months, Bruce came over to my house quite often and my girl friend got a close-hand look at me flying about the livingroom. I broke every piece of furniture that I had during those sessions and on more than one occasion he offered to teach my girl friend, but she wasn't interested.



## Chapter 7

Bruce was one of the best people in the Wing Chun style before he developed a different approach to his application of the art. This is something that a person should be aware of if he is thinking of following the path that Bruce traveled. Bruce modified the Wing Chun style in ways that allowed him to eventually get around other Wing Chun men, but in order for him to make these modifications work he had to be almost as good as the top people in the style. Only then could he come up with ways to equalize the difference between them and himself. Bruce's sticking hand skill was developed to the point where he could tie up and hit almost anyone in the clan. This gave him the necessary speed, strength and confidence that he needed to successfully go outside of sticking.

While Bruce was living in Seattle he encountered few people who could press him to move. When he moved to California he met people who could move with greater speed and he was forced to introduce things like faking and feinting before he made his attack. Feinting was a direct reversal of the doctrine that he preached in Seattle. He taught me that the person who moves first is the one who has the best chance of coming out on top in a fight. Bruce said that the primary reason that you don't feint moves is because your opponent might be better at feinting and allowed you to feint yourself out of position. He also said that a person who closes fast will probably score on a man who is faking. Perhaps feinting is something that one gets into when they approach Bruce's level but it isn't a concept that the average person can use in a fight.

When Bruce started to teach me he was just breaking away from the Wing Chun and the technique that he did was still very much like Wing Chun, the major difference was in his method of application. Wing Chun stressed that techniques should be done with little force. Bruce taught me to put every bit of energy that I had into our sticking practice sessions. Whenever I stuck hands with him he told me that all of the lines that Wing Chun mentioned were not necessary and that violations of them could be used effectively against the Wing Chun style.

Bruce reduced the vast number of Wing Chun sticking hand techniques to less than ten. The people who I have taught over the years have used his principles with good results. They have either ended a fight with one punch, or with a brief series of straight punches. None of them have lost.

Bruce trained me in the same manner that he himself trained. He drilled into me a good grasp of the basic principles and I would often challenge his new concepts if they didn't have a solid basis in function. Usually my first question was, "Will it work for me?" If the answer was no, I would file it away for a future time when my body would be able to react with the needed speed and power that the technique required to be done successfully.

Once Bruce decided on what techniques he was going to take from Wing Chun, he began to solidify them by making them as strong as possible. He did hundreds of pushups which he made progressively harder as they became easier. When he could do pushups on his thumbs and pushups with 250 lbs. on his back he moved on to other exercises. The next major change that he made was the addition of new kicking to the traditional Wing Chun technique.

The first kicks that Bruce was interested in were from the Northern Mantis; he said that the northern people were good at kicking because they used their legs for transportation. He said that the southern styles were mostly hands because of the use of boats as the major vehicle of transportation in the south. Bruce felt that the Northern Mantis had the swiftest and smoothest kicking of all the Gung Fu styles. He spent a lot of hours practicing the kicking methods of this style and another one called Jeet Kune. Both styles use kicks that have little of the focus that is found in other Asian kicking arts. Bruce said that Chinese kicks are based on speed, and that any damage they inflict is a direct result of this speed.

Earlier Bruce had talked about the use of sharpened coins or knives wedged into the sole of his shoes as kicking tools but he came to regard their use as being impractical. When Bruce first got into leg training he was like a kid with a new toy. Everywhere he went he was kicking and it finally led him into flexibility exercises. Bruce wasn't very flexible and he knew that he would have to improve his flexibility if he were to become an all around Gung Fu man. He began to speak often about the incompleteness of the Wing Chun style because of their limited kicking. From what I could see of Bruce he didn't really need the kicking power because his hands were more than enough. All I can figure is that he wanted as much over-kill as he could possibly get.

In his quest to gain flexibility, Bruce tried all of the exercises that he could find in old Gung Fu books. He used several of the photos and illustrations in these books as goals to shoot for. He was particularly impressed with some of the photos that he saw in a book on the Eagle Claw. One of the pictures showed a man doing the splits with his toe in his mouth. Another photo showed a man standing with one foot touching the top of his head while he stood balanced on the other foot. While I'm sure that Bruce would have liked to have been able to demonstrate the same kind of flexibility, he often said that over stretching the legs could result in ligaments that wouldn't support the legs in a proper manner.

Bruce started out using heel and toe kicks. He tried kicking to the side but didn't like the idea that the kick had to land at just the right moment or it wouldn't work. He brought a number of Gung Fu books on stretching back from Canada and began training his students in the practice of leg and body stretching. This was around the time that I stopped working out at his school because I believed in the methods that he had first taught me and couldn't see any good reason to change them. Another factor that pushed me away from practice was Bruce saying that he wasn't sure that he wanted to teach people what he was doing, and that he was in the process of hiding the real techniques of his method. Bruce was still teaching the general techniques but not the ways to make them effective. He was no longer teaching the concepts that a man could take and build on for himself.

Bruce started to seriously train the leg with a double toe kick. He trained his kick by kicking at an air shaft on the ceiling in the basement of Edison Technical High School. The shaft was about seven feet high and Bruce would take a crack at it every day when we arrived at school. When he first started kicking he was a long way from touching the vent, but day by day he came closer until one day he finally touched it. From that day forward he was able to kick the vent with ease.

The primary event that changed Bruce's concept of kicking took place at a Judo tournament in Tacoma, Washington. The Air Force was having their Judo championships and during the intermission there was a Karate demonstration by Hidetake Nishiyama and another Karate man from Roseburg, Oregon. This was the first time that either of us had seen Karate performed by a leading practitioner. The man from Oregon looked to be about six foot or better and I think that he was a second degree in Karate. Hidetake Nishiyama was a fifth degree and he was introduced as the best of Japan's young Karate men.

The demonstration began with him doing a form which was done with a kind of grace and beauty that I have yet to see repeated. After the form he demonstrated individual techniques. First they would announce what Nishiyama was going to do, and give the purpose of the move. Next he would do the move in two parts. The first part was done in slow motion so that everyone had a chance to see what was going to take place. The second part was done at top speed and it was hardly visible. The most impressive part of the demonstration was the control that Nishiyama demonstrated when he showed crescent kicks to the head. He effortlessly cranked his foot up to the level of his helper's head and held it there while the announcer talked about the use of the kick. From the same position he retracted the leg and sent it flying back to a spot an inch from his helper's temple. This was the greatest display of body control that I had ever seen. Not only was I impressed, but so was Bruce.

After the demonstration Bruce went to talk to Nishiyama. He never did say what transpired but later I saw Nishiyama showing some moves to his helper that looked like something that Bruce would do. He was demonstrating these moves to his helper in a way that looked as though he didn't think too much of them. Bruce never did talk about what had happened between him and Nishiyama and I never asked. One thing that I'm sure of is that Bruce was impressed with Nishiyama's kicking because he talked about it all the way home.

When I asked Bruce where he thought that Nishiyama stood on the scale that he used to measure the skill of other people he said that Nishiyama was about to pass through the gate that separates those who are good from those who are great. Nishiyama's body control was the thing that had the greatest effect on Bruce. When you watched him move his legs you couldn't help but wish that you could move the same way. After we got back from the demonstration all that Bruce could talk about was developing control over his legs. He started to train that very night toward the development of the same kind of focus and control that we had witnessed at the demonstration. He was determined to develop Nishiyama's flexibility and power in his legs. Bruce got all of the available Karate books on how to train and stretch the legs and devoted several hours a week to leg practice.

His first attempts to develop a focused kick were to the front. When he started to seriously train the legs he discovered that the inside of his legs were so bound up that he couldn't stretch out. I can remember a time when it was difficult for him to bend over and touch his toes. He had an old Gung Fu exercise book that said to stretch the legs by developing the ability to touch the head on the thighs. When Bruce first tried this exercise he wasn't able to come close, and it took several months before he could do it. Bruce

began his stretching by touching the floor with his finger tips and progressed toward touching it with his elbows. He definitely had no special advantage when it came to stretching out, and it was the same painful process for him that it is for most of us. The fact that Wing Chun used no stretching exercises worked against him and the time that he had spent developing a fast close had tightened up his legs until they were almost impossible to stretch. His later development of a sidekick was also limited by the hard muscles in his legs. Every time that he kicked to the side he said that it hurt like hell, unless he turned his supporting foot in the opposite direction. This foot position later became a permanent characteristic of his kick.

The last time that Bruce went back to Hong Kong while he was still living in Seattle he said that Yip Man had been holding out on him. Bruce said that Yip Man had a secret method of tying up the legs that he didn't know about. When he had left for Hong Kong, leg training was the foremost thing in his mind, and he returned with a new way to close on a kicker without getting kicked.

Bruce said that Yip Man had told him that the best way for him to train the leg was to practice holding it in the hanging horse position (the weight is supported on one leg while the other leg is held extended in front of you). When he returned from Hong Kong he did a lot of this leg extension in order to develop a strong and functional kick. When Bruce first began this exercise he could hardly hold his leg knee-high. After several weeks of practice he was able to hold it waist-high but only for a few seconds. Later he was able to hold it out to the front longer by pointing his toe.

I never did see him hold out his leg to the side. The side kick extension was something that he got into after he went to California. When I saw a picture of him in the 1964 tournament at L.A. I saw that he was using a half side — half back kick. Part of the reason for this unique kick was a bad ankle which prevented him from doing the kick in the conventional way. While I was around Bruce he only used a side kick to the knee. He learned this low side kick from Richard Leong, a leading Choy Li Fut man, who had a beautiful low side kick.

During his earlier years Bruce was strongly influenced by the principles of Wing Chun which dictated that the best way to attack was to the front. It wasn't until later when he had learned to move in any direction that he changed this concept. Part of this change was due to Richard's influence. Richard could kick and move with equal skill in any direction, and his ability in this area didn't escape Bruce's keen perception.

Bruce's ankle injury made him stand a lot more erect than he would have liked to have stood. Both Richard and Fook Young were able to attack and defend from a low stance and Bruce would have liked to have been able to follow in their footsteps. He said that low stances were better because it is difficult to stop attacks that angle up, and to punch down through someone's arms.

Jim Demile ran into Bruce when he was coming out with his book, *The Philosophical Art of Self Defense*. Bruce told Jim that if we wanted to be in it we should be up at Ruby Chow's restaurant on the day that he was going to take the pictures. We both thought that it would be kind of cool to be in a book so we called him up and told him that we would be there. The shooting

was done in the parking lot next to the Ruby Chow restaurant. The photographer was a friend of Bruce's from Hong Kong who was taking a watch repair course at Edison Tech. The pictures were shot in front of a fence that divides the lot from the restaurant

Most of the techniques in the book are from other styles and not Wing Chun. The first part of the book was a series of exercises that Bruce took from other Gung Fu books. He did all of the art work and wrote the text. I set up the throwing and took the falls. The first part of the book involved Bruce and James Lee. The rest of the book involved Jim, Taky, Charlie and myself. When the book came out I didn't think that it was worth the \$5 price for a serious martial art student. The book wasn't written as a learning text. It was written as an introduction to the existence of another world of martial arts that few Americans knew about.

One funny thing that I can remember about the book was the hard time that Bruce had posing for the front cover picture. His front leg was held extended in front of him and just about the time that the photographer was ready to take the picture, something went wrong. The guy was trying to hurry and correct the flaw, and Bruce kept yelling, "Hurry up and fix the damn thing before my leg falls off." This was right after Bruce had learned to hold his leg extended in front of him, but he couldn't hold it for long.

Most of the techniques in the book were off the top of Bruce's head. He would say that he wanted one guy to do this and one guy to do that, and then he would have the cameraman take the picture. His primary reason for doing the book was that he needed the money that he hoped to receive from its sale. He told me that James Lee in Oakland had suggested to him that he write a book. James was sure that a book would make money for Bruce. Bruce paid \$600.00 to have the book printed and he told me that he received \$5,000.00 from its sale. Bruce always kept records of the things that he discovered and he said that some day he was going to write a book called the Tao of Gung Fu. He said that the book would tell the average person how they could become strong at Gung Fu.

Bruce felt that once a person achieved a fair level of proficiency in straight punching and sticking that he would be able to hold his own against most opponents once he made the initial contact. He often emphasized the truth of this concept with a demonstration of how helpless I was against his sticking. I was really working hard to master sticking hands but could never come close to touching Bruce, unless he let me. In his later teachings, he glossed over sticking and straight punching and didn't seem to stress them to most of his students. Even though I could never touch Bruce in sticking hands, I could make the concept work against his other students.

Bruce liked to leave out parts of things and let students figure out what was missing. Often I felt that he didn't want anyone to follow his path, because he made it clear that a person was going to have to be strongly in his corner before he would reveal his best techniques. As time passed he became less and less inclined to give out basic conceptual information to anyone.

Bruce's power was so great that he could effectively strike an opponent from any position. At his final level of development he could have defended or attacked using any kind of movement, and been successful.

In a fight Bruce's major weapon of attack would be his hands, which

were far faster than this feet. In his movies he used the same kind of close with his legs that he had with the hands, but I still think that his hands were the most dangerous thing about him although I can see from his movies that he finally developed the kinds of kicks that are effective against someone who is big and tough. When I first met Bruce in 1959 his kicks weren't very strong. They would have been uncomfortable if they landed on the knee or the groin, but they were used by Bruce more as supplementary weapons than as primary weapons. He used them to create openings for his hands. It wasn't until 1962 that Bruce got into using the leg as a primary attack weapon. In 1973 Bruce could have seriously hurt anyone in the world with a kick, but his real killing weapon was still his fist.

While Bruce was still living in Seattle he always made it a point to show me his new discoveries. One time at a party Bruce took me downstairs to his bedroom and spent two hours talking about the close that he had just developed from fencing. He also showed me a series of exercises that he was using to develop a special kind of muscle tone that would allow him to punch in any direction without a build up. One exercise that he showed me was holding a seventy pound barbell across his extended forearms. Another exercise was to let the same barbell roll up and down on his forearms.

Bruce taught me that there are always two or three ways to do the same technique. The first way is easy and it builds power in the movement. When sufficient power is developed in the first method it is time to move on to the second method. The second method is more efficient than the first, but it requires the power that is developed in the first move. The third method of doing a technique is always the most difficult because it requires both the power of the first move and the efficiency of the second. It is the shortest and most powerful way of doing a technique. Bruce figured that most people would never develop the skill and power necessary to use the third method of doing a technique, but that hard practice at anyone of the different levels would give a person some effective measure of self-defense skill. The higher reaches of the art require a sequential progression through each of the three stages of technique development. Bruce showed me several of the more advanced ways of doing a technique, but I lacked the speed and the power to perform them with any measure of proficiency. After I quit formal practice I would often check back to see what Bruce was teaching. He was teaching some of the advanced techniques that he had shown me, but what he wasn't teaching was the Wing Chun foundation that would make them solid.

Several of Bruce's former students in Seattle are still active in Gung Fu but none of them have the speed and power that is necessary to make third stage movements effective. One of the things that prevented people from attaining a "Bruce" like skill level is that he gave out less and less conceptual information as he progressed in his own development. It is theoretically possible to follow Bruce's line of development if a person possesses the right basic concepts, but few of his students understand the concept of pressure in sticking hands, use of the forward hand to engage or disengage the opponent's hands, (like a fencing foil), or how to vary speed, rhythm, and pattern of attack.

As Bruce got progressively better I realized that none of his students were ever going to approach his skill level. He once told me in the early sixties that few of his students were very good, and that it was unlikely that

this situation would ever change because he no longer felt the desire or need to pass on to the public the kinds of information that he had uncovered.

One outside practice area that we used was under the Blue Cross building on the corner of Broadway and James. The building sits on high concrete pillars, and the spaces between the pillars were used as a parking area. It was there that we held our practice sessions on Saturday and Sunday mornings. I brought my brother Mike to these practice sessions and he attended them long after I had stopped coming around. Bruce's attitude had started to change and I drifted away from formal practice. I found it a little difficult to start calling someone who I had been running around with for two years, C-Foo. To me Bruce had always been Bruce just as I had always been Jesse to him. I had to make a decision as to what was more important Bruce as a friend or Bruce as a formal teacher. I chose his friendship and stayed away from the practice sessions. He continued to come by my house quite often and I still got in a couple of hours practice with him every week. Eventually the Blue Cross practice sessions were moved to a basement in Chinatown.

Bruce and I were still friends and he talked to me about plans that he had for the system he had developed. For a couple of years a branch school plan was in the forefront of his thinking, but as his own skill increased he moved away from this idea. The uniforms that he created were an outgrowth of the multiple school planning and so were the rank emblems. I can remember sitting at the Lin Yin restaurant with him talking about the type of symbol that would best show the concepts of his style. After three hours of discussion, Bruce said that the symbol that he liked best was the Ying and Yang symbol. His major problem with the Ying and Yang was that it resembled the Union Pacific Railway symbol. His idea to change the railroad look was to place the small marks that appear in the I-Ching around the symbol, but he decided that they made it look too much like the emblem on the Korean flag. I suggested that arrows might look good and he agreed. When he first talked about the color of the emblem, he was going to make them all the same color and use different color shashes to denote rank. I suggested that he use different colored emblems to show rank and he said that the idea sounded good and picked out some colors. The colors that he picked that night were yellow and white, green and white, blue and white, grey and white, brown and white, red and white, red and gold, and white and gold. He started and ended with the same kind of colors, yellow, white and gold and white along the same lines as the Judo grading system. The Judo system differentiates the completed cycle from beginner to master by the use of a double thick white belt which signifies that the person has gone the full cycle. Bruce symbolized the same concept by substituting gold for yellow at the highest rank. When all of this ranking business was coming together I was not practicing at the club and I had been so well indoctrinated by Bruce that I didn't associate much importance with rank. My only interest was in a skill level that would get me through any encounters that I had. I was never ranked in his new system because I no longer belonged to the formal club even though I continued to practice with Bruce on the side.

Sometimes when I went back to visit the club, Bruce would ask me to practice but I didn't like what they were doing and refused to come on a

regular basis. When I did practice, I didn't have any trouble with any of the guys who were there. I was still able to out punch and stick them. Bruce made several attempts to get me to practice on a regular basis but I couldn't see them learning that much and I was involved in other things. Bruce and I were still pretty close and he was always more than gracious when I came around. He always introduced me as his first former student and I always felt that he was still hoping that all the time and energy that he had spent working with me wasn't going to waste.

Whenever I attended practice I made it a point to do all of the techniques harder and faster than everyone else. Most of the students had good hand speed but their punches lacked the kind of power needed to drop a big, nasty guy who was set on hurting them. Some had fast kicks but they were the kind that you could take if you had your adrenaline going. Bruce had created a kicking form that contained most of the kicks found in Gung Fu and action drills done from short and long range. Most of the techniques that he was teaching were modifications of things from Wing Chun, Preying Mantis, Tia Chi and the Eagle Claw. Bruce's modifications were often better than the original forms that they were taken from. The new techniques were more direct than the originals but their effective application was difficult for most students.

People don't get the kind of speed and power that is required in effective Gung Fu from just doing techniques. Bruce's power was the result of his body development which he pushed to such a high level that he was approaching maximum human tolerances. His ligament and tendon strength was stronger than that of normal athletes, because of the hundreds of thousands of movements that he had done against different kinds of pressure, weights, springs, bodies and gravity. His muscle tone was such that when he flexed his arm the muscles were as hard as stone. This maximum development in muscle tone enable Bruce to push for their maximum level of development. Everyone doesn't have to develop the same strength that Bruce did, but they do have to strengthen certain areas of their body until these areas are stronger than comparable areas on stronger people. Most of these areas are generally under developed on even the most highly trained athletes.

Bruce's arm muscles were more developed than those of a first class gymnast and his elbow joints had more ligament and tendon strength than a world class weight lifter. His tendon strength far exceeded the muscle strength that he applied in his punching. Yet this specific area development was something that he seldom taught to his students. Most of his students that I talked with seem to feel that doing a move long enough will someday result in their doing it like Bruce. The truth of the matter is that repetitious movement is no longer adequate once you reach a point where you are making no further strength and speed gains. Some kind of overload system must be used to build up the basic material (muscles, tendons and ligaments) that you are working with. With each new gain in strength it is necessary to return to the basic repetitions until you reach another stick point. This process must be repeated over and over again if you want to excel in martial arts. Part of what determines the level of development that you obtain is your ability to come up with new and different ways to increase strength and power after conventional ways have been exhausted. The hard work and



dedication that this kind of effort requires prevents most people from becoming good martial artists. The fact that few people have ever considered this kind of training concept is another thing that prevents the development of really skillful martial artists.

The only reason that I learned about how Bruce really developed himself was because of the close interaction that I had with him and the need that he had to show someone what he was developing and get feedback about his training methods. Bruce's technique got better and better as he learned more about how to develop power through proper body mechanics. He often said that all he could do in the area of teaching other people was point them in the right direction. Bruce's real secrets were in the use of power once it had been developed, and how to increase it through better body mechanics.

Many people who practice Gung Fu think that there is something magical in the movements of the forms that will turn them into heavy punchers and kickers. The best that any style can give you is a loose structure and guidelines which can result in the smooth application of the movements involved in that particular system. If your desire is to be able to perform a high speed dance, then the practice of forms will do it for you. If, on the other hand, you desire blinding fast movements, with powerful kicks and punches you must go far beyond the methods that are taught in formal classes.

One of the sad things about many people who practice the striking arts is that they walk around thinking that they have the world by the tail because they can do a few forms. Action in the street is a lot different from action in a club where everyone does the same movements. The dedicated martial artist has to go out into the street and find out how and when attacks take place, what kind of attacks they will be and how he can best deal with them. He must also develop the kind of physical endurance that is characteristic of boxers and wrestlers. Every boxer and wrestler has developed moves that can be depended on in an emergency fighting situation. Boxers either have a strong punch that they can count on or they have become skillful in the art of evading punches. They have all experienced the feeling of getting hit and have learned to take heavy punches without quitting. Their bodies have learned that they can stand a lot more punishment than they had originally thought possible.

Wrestlers have learned the same thing through long and strenuous workouts. These workouts have strengthened their ability to carry on even when they feel like quitting. Few martial artists ever reach a comparable level of development, and the ones who do are far beyond the rest. Most martial artists don't appreciate how difficult it is to tie up with a boxer or a wrestler and come out on top.

The first application requirement of any system is to be able to apply the basic moves against smooth, slow, and fast attacks. The next step is to develop ways to apply the same defenses against a wide range of varied attacks; straight punches, round punches, uppercuts, ridgehands, circle kicks, straight kicks, etc. Many martial artists are so caught up in some idea of personal glorification that they lose sight of the fact that the first purpose of any martial art is to protect one's self.

Some people are mature enough that martial arts takes them into a

psychological realm where they are able to gain a better perspective of the world and their relationship to it. Unfortunately, this perspective isn't open to all who seek it. It also isn't exclusive to martial arts. It can be found in a number of different disciplines, and is experienced by trackmen, skiers, surfers and a host of others who put forth great physical effort in trying to develop their best skills. The major difference between people in other areas and people in martial arts is that most of them are so caught up in what they are doing that they don't take time to sit down and write about the feelings and thoughts they are experiencing.

Many people come to martial arts seeking a positive change in themselves. Sometimes they seek some special feeling that will enable them to transcend life. Other times they are looking for a way to feel more like the kind of person that they feel that they should be, and sometimes they are looking for an exercise or discipline that will put and keep them in better shape. Most of the reasons that bring people to martial arts will seldom push them into the upper levels of the art. People who have tasted the feeling of accomplishment that comes with being good at something and feel that it's important for them to find out just how good they can be are the people who reach the top.

For awhile I was learning the Southern Mantis from Fook Young at the Chinese Youth Club. I didn't practice long enough to learn any of the forms but I did pick up some hand movements, that are effective in a fighting situation. I also learned what some of the different styles looked like. He showed me movements from the Pa-Kua, Wah Kune and other styles. I appreciate the things that he taught me because they gave me an overview of what Gung Fu encompasses. Although Fook Young was primarily a Southern Mantis man, he knew a lot about other styles. Bruce was teaching him basic Wing Chun in exchange for Fook Young's teaching him a variety of forms from different styles. He talked so much about Fook Young's fighting ability that I was amazed when I first saw his small size. Fook Young stood about five feet tall and weighed less than a hundred pounds. I was looking at him and wondered how a man so small could defend himself when he dropped into a low stance and scurried across the floor like a crab throwing a series of groin level punches.

Suddenly I saw how easy it would be to underestimate the man in a fight. Fook Young could move faster in a low stance than most people can move while standing erect. Bruce learned a lot from him and I feel safe in saying that part of his greatness was due to what he learned from Fook Young. Either Fook Young, or a minister of the Chinese Baptist Church, taught Bruce the form he would later include in the naming of his art. The name of the form is the Jeet Kune. When Bruce coined the final name for his art he added the word Do, which is a Japanese word meaning way.

After the formation of the first club things were going all right until Howard Hall had to return to the East coast to take a job. No sooner had he left when other people started to drop out. The original group dwindled down to such a small number that we were unable to pay the school rent. We finally lost the place and moved practice along with my body out to Leroy Garcia's, before moving to Leroy's I had been living in Chinatown. We had official practice on the weekends but Bruce was always around because

## Chapter 8

he liked Leroy and I, so we got to work out almost every day. After Bruce got his driver's license Leroy would often loan him his car. Sherry, Garcia and I were all going to Edison Tech, and sometimes when I drove Leroy's truck to school Bruce would ride back with me at night, if I didn't drive he would often ride back with Sherry.

Bruce and Sherry loved to dance, but Leroy didn't so he often suggested that the two of them go out dancing. On one of these occasions they stopped at the Tia Tung restaurant on the way home. Bruce pulled up ahead of a parking place in order to back up and park. Four men in another car pulled up and parked in Bruce's spot. Bruce was irritated by the incident, but he let his desire for action rest with Sherry. He asked her if he should get the four guys and Sherry said no. Later she said that it might have been interesting to see the surprise on their faces as Bruce preceded to knock the hell out of all four of them.

Leroy taught Bruce how to shoot and gave him his first gun (a twenty-five automatic) for a birthday present. Bruce told me later that he was target shooting at pigeons out of his window at Ruby Chow's. He was surprised to learn that this was not permissible behavior in the city. The first time that Leroy took Bruce out to shoot was incredibly funny. Bruce had Leroy's nine inch barreled 357 magnum strapped to his side, was holding a 30-06 in his hand and had a cowboy hat on his head. Bruce was an excellent shot and could score good patterns at 75 yards with a hand gun.

One thing that I have never heard mentioned in writings about Bruce is that he stuttered, especially when he got excited or tried to pronounce certain sounds. The whole time that I knew him I don't think that I ever heard him say my name without stuttering. He always had to repeat the J in my name several times before he could spit it out.

A lot of Bruce's impressions of the U.S. came from the people that he met when he first came here. Every time I see one of his movies I notice some of the impressions that he picked up in the Seattle area.

One of the people Bruce liked well was John Jackson. John was well read and knowledgeable about Eastern Culture and he and Bruce became fast friends. Bruce went daily to Jackson's apartment and the two of them once took a trip to California with Jim Davis another friend. John was mildly interested in the physical aspects of Gung Fu and intensely interested in the philosophy behind the art which he was always questioning Bruce about.

Jackson drove Bruce to California so that he could teach a group of Arthur Murray dancers the Cha Cha for thirty-five bucks an hour.

Every time that Bruce went to California he spent a day teaching dancing and a couple of days looking for new Gung Fu clubs. The way he talked about what he saw in California led me to believe that he wasn't too impressed with what was being taught there. The one person who did impress him was a Choy Li Fut man named Richard Leong. Bruce said that Richard was older than himself and was quite a menacing figure when you saw him bearing down on you. He talked Richard into dropping the idea of going to school in California and got him to come to Seattle. Bruce told me that 24 year old Richard was the best young man in the Choy Li Fut style. Bruce was glad to see Richard come to Seattle, but he was always thinking in the back of his mind that Richard in a fight with one of his seniors had

been successful in forcing him to give ground. The thought that Richard might turn against him was never far from Bruce's mind, and he kept a close watch on the way that Richard responded toward him.

Richard was taller than Bruce and heavier through the shoulders. He said that most of his shoulder development resulted from training with iron bracelets. He enrolled at Edison Technical High School and remained in Seattle for three months. After three months he returned to California because no school in the area offered a four year degree in electronics. Bruce kept waiting for Richard to turn against him but his fears never materialized. Richard was both friendly and helpful to both Bruce and his students. He taught Bruce one of the stances that he used in his later movies and several hand techniques that could be fitted into Wing Chun. Bruce in turn taught Richard the Wing Chun stance, punches, and forms.

Richard's punches were very strong and his speed was equal to Bruce's. Before Richard returned to California he told me that Wing Chun was a better one on one system than Choy Li Fut. Bruce made similar comments about Choy Li Fut. He said that it was the most effective system that he had seen for fighting more than one person. The two systems lie at opposite ends of the Gung Fu spectrum in both principle and practice, but a person who mastered both styles would certainly be someone to reckon with.

Walking down the street between Richard and Bruce left me feeling as though I were completely helpless. I had won several Judo Championships, but either of them could have handled me effortlessly.

The first time that I saw Richard's form of attack was at Washington Park. He moved down the field like a spinning top, with his arms and legs lashing out powerfully in all directions. Watching him move made it hard to imagine anyone penetrating his defense, or escaping his attack. Bruce confirmed my thoughts by saying that the Choy Li Fut is one of the most difficult styles to attack and defend against. He said that Choy Li Fut was the only style that had traveled to Thailand to fight Thai boxers and hadn't lost.

I asked Bruce if any good Wing Chun men had gone to Thailand to fight and he said no. When I asked him why Wing Chun men weren't interested in going to Thailand he said that those who weren't very good didn't dare go because if they lost they would have to answer to the other clan members for disgracing the style, and those who were good didn't feel the need to go.

In 1960 Bruce wasn't aware of the skill level of Thai boxers. Later he discovered that many of them were also world ranked regular boxers. Once he was aware of this fact, he said that it was going to take much more than practicing Gung Fu forms to successfully defeat the Thais. He said that slipping and taking punches from some of the best boxers in the world makes the Thais contemptuous of fast Gung Fu flicks in the air. He felt that Gung Fu would have to adopt many of the Thai's training methods if they wished to be competitive with them. The training methods that Bruce mentioned were road work, skipping rope, rapid punching against heavy bags, effective kicking that hurts wherever it lands, and the ability to give and take punishment. He said that unless Gung Fu develops these kinds of skills it can forget about defeating the Thais.

When Richard took off down the field at Washington Park there was a group of guys watching and two of them had the following dialogue, "What

in the hell is that guy doing?" His companion replied, "I don't know what the hell he is doing, I am just glad that he isn't doing it to me."

Richard taught me one of the two forms that he thought was vital to learning Choy Li Fut. I wanted to develop a vicious form of attack and Choy Li Fut seemed to have some of the elements that I was seeking. I had already asked Bruce if it was okay to study under Richard and he said yes. He felt that Richard's instruction would give me a broader view of Gung Fu, and that Richard was one of the best people that I could learn from. Richard showed me the Horse stance and told how it was supposed to be used. He could stand in a very low side horse that made him very difficult to effectively kick. His Horse used the outside of the leg to guard against a stomp to the instep, and he could twist with the force of a kick to the knee. He felt that his Horse stance made it very difficult for anyone to break his leg. Richard could move very fast out of this position, and I had to run to catch him.

The stomp to the instep was one of his favorite attacks because it causes such intense pain that you can knock out an opponent with one delivered with moderate force. Years later I learned that the instep is that center of a large nerve plexus and that a sharply delivered blow can cause death.

Another weapon that Richard taught me was the use of the Chop Choy, this was his favorite weapon and he had several ways of using it. He didn't like the wide swings that a lot of Choy Li Fut people used, because they left too many openings for counters. In spite of his dislike of these wide swings Richard could still do them with blinding speed. I told myself that if he could do the wide swings the way that he could and still not like them that I would be foolish not to pay attention to his instructions.

Richard had reduced his method of Choy Li Fut to about ten moves which he could do with equal speed and power. Richard's favorite weapon Chop Choy is more commonly known as the four knuckle fist. It is a deadly weapon because it can concentrate the full force of a punch into a small area, which result in greater impact and penetration. Richard said that he could break a three inch thick board with his Chop Choy, but that he didn't emphasize board breaking because he had never fought a board. He did mention with pride a member of his clan who could break four inch thick chair seats with his Chop Choy.

Richard was in many ways as interesting and as exciting as Bruce. He was young and dynamic, and his Gung Fu was such that he had to step aside for few people. His manner was very quiet but that might have been due to his being in a foreign country. Had Richard been sparked by the same motivation that drove Bruce, he too would have ended up with his name in lights. When I met Richard his greatest interest was in electronic engineering. I guess his motivation toward fighting had been satisfied when he reached a point where he didn't fear losing to anyone.

Before Richard's arrival in Seattle, Bruce had told me about an incident that had happened between Richard and another man who was later to become his best student. The man's name is Bill Paul and he later became a big name in American Judo. He represented the U.S. at the Olympics, the World Judo Championships, the Pan American games and won several national Judo contests. Bruce said that Paul was once present when he and Richard were discussing Gung Fu. When Richard started to talk about the

over hand swings of the Choy Li Fut style Paul had said that he could easily stop that kind of blow. Richard told Paul that his strikes were very difficult to block and offered to give him a demonstration. Paul accepted the invitation and was knocked to the floor when he attempted to block Richard's downward swing. Paul went on to study under Richard and became his star pupil in the United States.

I met Paul in San Jose at the 60 or 61 Judo nationals, and we played around and exchanged information. Paul introduced me to Walter Todd who was a fourth degree blackbelt in Karate. Todd was the first high ranking blackbelt that I had talked to, and the fact that he wasn't oriental made him even more impressive. In the early sixties there weren't very many fourth degree Karate blackbelts in the U.S. and to find one who wasn't Asian was really a surprise. Todd showed me a couple of his forms and I was greatly impressed with the smoothness and the speed of his moves. Each move flowed into the next with no hesitation and I could see that he had spent several years of hard practice acquiring that high skill level that he demonstrated. Todd and I talked for awhile and he told me that he was a Karate instructor for the U.S. Air Force.

After my conversation with Todd, Paul and I did a little sticking hands and he was unable to get in. Paul said that he had stuck hands with one of Bruce's juniors from the Wing Chun style in San Francisco and that he had experienced little difficulty in getting past the man's defenses. He said that my sticking was much stronger, and wished that he could have learned his sticking from Bruce. Paul showed me Richard's modified Choy Li Fut and I found it to be quite effective. The modifications were an infusion of several Wing Chun techniques and a little sticking hands.

Paul told me that when Richard moved back to the Bay area from Seattle that he had become his assistant instructor at the Y.M.C.A. This action had made many of the Gung Fu people in the Bay area angry with Richard. None of them was capable of beating him in a fight so they just talked among themselves about how much they disliked what he had done. When Richard left for London, England, Paul said that he started to get indications of their disapproval. He didn't believe in ignoring the situation so he went directly to the people who were doing the talking and asked them if they had something against him or Richard. He told them that Richard wasn't around to defend himself, but that he would be happy to fill in for him. Paul said that no one accepted his offer and he was still teaching when I met him in the early sixties. That was the only time that I ever talked to Paul, and I don't know if he is still active in the Choy Li Fut style of Gung Fu. The last time that I heard of Richard he was a policeman in Hong Kong.



*Illustration by Karen Haggard*

During the period that followed my moving to Leroy Garcia's we put on several demonstrations. We did one at the World Trade fair in Seattle, one at the Chinese Community center in Seattle's chinatown, one in front of the U. of W. football team, one at the South Seattle Fieldhouse, and one in Vancouver B.C.

The Vancouver demonstration was given in front of an all Chinese audience and it felt strange to perform in front of an audience that might contain other Gung Fu men. I fantasized that some of them might know the forms that I was demonstrating, and that they were asking themselves what in the hell is that guy doing to my style. The Vancouver demonstration turned out to be the most successful demonstration that we ever put on. The audience was very happy with our performance and Bruce was hailed as the young master from Hong Kong via Seattle. The tough part of any demonstration for me was when the heat from the stage lights effected Bruce and his accuracy started to fade. I was Bruce's working partner in all of the demonstrations that we put on, and the only time that I worried about his accuracy was when the stage lights started to make him sweat. Whenever he got over heated his control would fade and I would get the hell knocked out of me. On this particular day Bruce hit me four or five times and I was beginning to wonder if I was going to make it through the demonstration. His punches were the kind that hurt like hell, even when he pulled them. The last punch that Bruce tagged me with was a backfist to the temple which almost knocked me out. When it was finally over I had a sore temple, swollen lips, and a bloody nose.

The feast that followed the demonstration was so fantastic that I forgot about all of my injuries and concentrated on eating. The dinner was held in the banquet room of a Chinese restaurant. The tables were lined with fifths of scotch and the courses that were served numbered at least ten. The meal was the best that I have ever eaten, and many of the dishes that were served were things that I have never seen before or since that night.

We spent four or five hours eating and drinking and Skip Ellsworth and I got into a contest to see who could drink the most. Skip lost the contest and by the time that we started back to the States he was passed out in the back of the car. When we reached the customs on the U.S. side, Skip almost didn't make it through. The guard asked Skip where he was born and he was so drunk that he told the official that he couldn't remember. The guard became so irritated with Skip's behavior that he was going to detain him. We finally got Skip to realize the importance of the situation and he convinced the guard that he was from Chicago.

The Vancouver event was the big turning point for Bruce. It was total acceptance by a group of people who were knowledgeable about Gung Fu. The fact that the audience was Chinese made Bruce feel that he had finally done something worthwhile.

Bruce fell victim to the lights another time during a demonstration that we did on television in Seattle. We were being filmed in a small studio and the temperature was close to a hundred degrees. When Bruce got around to doing the individual techniques with me he was wornout from the two forms that he had demonstrated. The first slip that Bruce made was to tag me in



the temple. The second slip was to poke me in the eyes with his fingers. My immediate response to the eye poke was a loud curse, which was heard by all of the T.V. listeners. I couldn't stop the tears that kept flowing from my eyes, but I did manage to finish the demonstration. Bruce was really sorry about the slips, and I told him not to worry about it.

One other time I saw Bruce make a bad slip was at his school in the University district. I hadn't seen him for several months and he was showing me some new things that he had developed. He was demonstrating on Taky Kimura, and Taky moved the instant that Bruce punched. Bruce's punch caught the edge of Taky's glasses and the broken lens almost took out Taky's right eye. Bruce was afraid that the broken glass had damaged Taky's eye and he rushed him over to the University Hospital. Everything worked out well but it was several days before Bruce could put the accident out of his mind.

One of the reasons that I have had good success in sticking with the classical people is because of their adherence to formal lines, and their inability to deal with my forward pressure. Bruce's method uses the same basic hand positions that the classical method uses but the slight modifications that he made makes them workable against all but the best of the classical people.

When I first met Bruce he would stick hands with me while he was wearing a blindfold, and I still couldn't get away. One blind sticking episode that Bruce told me about involved a man who had come to the Ruby Chow restaurant looking for him. The man told Bruce that he was a boxer and that he had heard that Bruce could tie up a man's hands while wearing a blindfold. Bruce told the man that he could control a person's movements while he was wearing a blindfold, and that it was a skill common to the better Wing Chun men. The boxer said that he didn't see how it was possible and that he would like Bruce to give him a demonstration. Bruce said that he was willing to demonstrate if the man was willing to agree to one stipulation; he would have to attack from the front and he would have to start his attack with Bruce's hands in contact with his arms. The man agreed to Bruce's conditions.

Bruce let the man inspect the blindfold to determine if it could be seen through. When he was satisfied that the blindfold couldn't be seen through Bruce had him place the blindfold tightly across his eyes. Once the blindfold was in place Bruce stood there with his arms extended waiting for the man to make contact with his hands. Instead of touching Bruce's hands the man stepped to the side and hit him. Bruce said that the boxer couldn't hit very hard and the attack angered rather than hurt him. He took off the mask and asked the man what had happened to the agreement that they had made. The boxer just smiled at him and said that he had gotten in on just like he figured he would. Bruce was extremely angry, but he tried not to let it show. He told the boxer that he would like to try it again. The second time Bruce rushed in with his arms extended and forced contact. Once contact was made he blasted in and knocked the boxer on his ass. Bruce's quick reactions scared the boxer so bad that he leaped up and ran away. Bruce commented that it would be a long time before the boxer tried some smart aleck trick like that again.

When Bruce left Seattle to move to California he had only one fight in

the U.S. The next time that I spoke with him he told me that he had gotten into a fight with a student of a student of the famous master who had appeared on the front cover of Blackbelt magazine breaking 17 bricks. Bruce was at his school in Oakland with Linda (his wife) and James Lee his assistant in Oakland, and the man walked in with four or five people. The man was wearing a Gung Fu uniform and his manner indicated that he was there to promote some type of trouble. Bruce gave me a detailed discription of the conversation that led up to the fight, but I have long since forgotten details. It is important to note that the man came looking for Bruce and not the other way around. Bruce said that he was both angry and pissed off that the challenge was taking place in front of his wife. Another thought that was rushing through his mind was whether he and James could win if the other people joined the attack.

When Bruce finally squared off to fight, the other people remained on the sidelines, and he focused all of his attention on the coming battle. Bruce made his attack and the man turned and fled around the room. As the man moved away from him he lashed out backwards with both hands. Bruce said that the man could really move fast and that it was all that he could to keep within punching range as he pursued him. He said that the man's backward strikes were some type of finger strike and that he felt them graze him across the forehead as he gave chase. Bruce chased the man around the room and several of his punches bounced off the back of the man's head. The man's speed at running away nullified much of the effect of Bruce's punches, and he was beginning to punch himself out. He said that he felt a slight touch of panic, not because of anything that the other man was doing but because he was running out of steam. The panic caused him to move a little faster and he managed to close and knock the man to the floor. He pinned the man to the floor and asked him what he had in mind now that he was trapped on the floor. The man said that he had made a mistake in coming to challenge Bruce, and acknowledged that he had lost the fight. The following week a story of the fight had appeared in the Chinese newspaper. The story said that Bruce had lost the fight and that he was in the hospital. It also said that Bruce had taken unfair advantage of the man by attacking before he was prepared. When Bruce read the story in the paper he rushed to it's office and demanded a retraction. Bruce was so mad that he could hardly control his temper. The editor agreed to print a retraction and Bruce forced him to reveal his source of information. The editor told him that he had gotten his information from Bruce's opponent. Bruce left the paper and headed straight for the restaurant where the man he had fought worked as a waiter. When he entered the door the man was in the act of pouring tea, and he became so shook up by Bruce's appearance that he poured tea all over the table before he ran to hide in the back of the restaurant. Bruce felt that he had made his point so he didn't follow the man into the kitchen.

I would like to emphasis that when the fight ended Bruce had the opportunity to seriously hurt his opponent but he didn't. This was an attitude that I found occurring over and over again in Bruce. Once he had an advantage, he would never push it beyond what was necessary.

The fight was one of the big turning points in Bruce's training methods. He had fought a fast opponent who didn't succumb to his past successful mode of attack and he had to resort to desperate measures to win. The

fight taught him that there were other men who could move with great speed and that he couldn't always depend on his quick close to end a fight. It also taught him the value of being in shape to fight for a long time, and that his punch was less devastating to a moving target. These new insights forced Bruce into doing serious roadwork.

The one time that I did hear about Bruce going out to find someone with a vengeance was when he was 19 years old. Charlie Woo's cousin told Charlie that Bruce wasn't a very good Gung Fu man, and that the Gung Fu people in China and Hong Kong would walk through him like he was nothing. The man also said that the techniques that Bruce did were ineffectual. Charlie made the mistake of telling Bruce what his cousin had said and Bruce hit the ceiling. He stewed about the cousins comments for a couple of days and decided that something had to be done. Bruce called Leroy Garcia and told him that he had to have a ride to the cousin's house.

When they reached the house Bruce wasted little time in getting to the subject of what had been said about him and Wing Chun. Leroy said that Bruce was so angry on the ride over to the man's house that he was afraid that Bruce was going to kill him. When Bruce finally confronted the cousin he told him that he was going to make him eat his words. The man tried to slough off what he had said as nothing of a serious nature, but Bruce wouldn't allow him to evade the issue. Bruce threatened to pluck out the man's eyes and break all the bones in his body. He forced the man to confess to making several degrading remarks, and when the man attempted to tone them down he screamed at him and called him a variety of unpleasant names. When the man finally realized that Bruce wasn't just an exercise in lip service he really got scared. It suddenly dawned on him that he was looking at a force that could end his life and no one there would be able to help him. Bruce never did attack the man, but I'm sure that he was as close as he could get to losing his self control. Once again Bruce backed off after he had made his point. Leroy said that he really felt sorry for the cousin, but there wasn't anything that he could do except hope and pray that the man didn't do anything foolish to trigger the situation. Fortunately, the man kept his mouth shut.

Later when Bruce talked to me about what had happened he said that he had grown tired of being criticised by people who didn't know a dam thing about Gung Fu. Charlie's cousin's comments had occurred at a time when Bruce was sensitive to outsiders remarks and he had over reacted by focusing all of his anger toward armchair Gung Fu men on Charlie's cousin.

Through my interaction with Bruce, I formed a strange association with some of the people he told me about. The one person that I really admired was Yip Man, Bruce's teacher. Sixteen years later I still wish that I had the skill that Yip man had as an old man. A younger Wing Chun man that I identified with was a man who's name I never knew. Bruce told me that this man wasn't very good at sticking hands, but that he compensated for his lack of skill in that area by working hard on the wooden dummy. The wooden dummy training had developed rough and hard forearms that allowed him to be successful in street encounters. The man's forearms were so rough that no one in the clan liked to stick hands with him because his battered forearms would remove their skin. I felt a strong bond with this man because I felt that I might possibly reach a similar skill level.

Bruce's development was so advanced that it was difficult to think of him as a model to imitate. He was developing at such a quick rate that I knew that I could never catch him. I felt that I could never become the exceptionally skillful Gung Fu man that he was, but that I could become very functional in the street. Looking back on the progress that I was making at the time I can now see that I was moving quite well compared to Bruce's other students. I can see that my progress was in some ways parallel to Bruce's. The difference was that he was functioning at a more advanced level. Had I continued to practice the same way that he practiced, I probably would have developed a skill level a lot closer to his.

The one thing that surprised me about Bruce's concepts is that they haven't led to the creation of students with skills comparable to his. His students are far from behind the skill level that he possessed when he first came to the U.S., much less the skill level that he had obtained before he died.

Bruce's approach to Gung Fu was a total commitment toward the complete realization of a fighting concept. Bruce spent all of his time going through new routines and thinking up new ways to improve his techniques. He took ideas from any source and subjected them to the greatest amount of reality testing that he could devise. His first move with a new technique was to discover what circumstances it would work under. The more situations a technique worked in, the more trust Bruce placed in it! He believed that people should develop blocks that will work in a variety of positions, and punches that will break through a variety of defenses. He also believed that total intergration of the mind and body is necessary if one is to become a first rate martial artist. Techniques should be drilled into your nervous system until they are reflexive and applicable to people of various sizes. Serious efforts in this direction will lead to a skill level where real martial arts men stand separate from the pretenders. These people who do go on to become extremely skillful provide the basis for the legendary stories that are written about martial arts.

One of the things that I often look back on is the way that Bruce taught me. Sometimes I wish that I had learned in a more formal setting and other times I'm glad that I learned in the manner that I did. I met Bruce during a trusting period of his life, and he showed me several techniques that he later refused to teach. Several of these techniques retarded my later development in Gung Fu, but increased my understanding in other areas. Bruce willingly showed me anything that I wanted to see, but as time passed he became more secretive around the other members of the school.

When Bruce moved to southern California he reversed his position and revealed all of his advanced techniques. The catch to what he revealed was that he taught few of the exercises that he had to do to reach his final skill level. It is important for all martial artists to know that the best results that can be achieved in a striking system are dependent on the proper application of progressive strength building exercises.

Once the basics of a system are mastered you should turn towards the development of power, and proper body mechanics. The development of correct body mechanics is difficult to master, and impossible to uniformly teach. The best that an instructor can do is to point you in the right direction, and keep you headed on your own course, because correct body

mechanics are based on feelings that are unique to each individual.

Bruce's personal training involved working with weights and isometrics. His first step away from Wing Chun was to apply the overload principle to the traditional Wing Chun hand positions. A portion of the Wing Chun form movements are done slowly with isometrics. Bruce did these movements with progressively heavier weights. He also practiced several of the wooden dummy techniques with weights in his hands. Bruce told me that he hoped to extend his power, and force further from the center of his body and to decrease his reaction time through weight training. He said that the stronger he could make his joints while they were held extended from the body, the harder that he would be able to kick and punch without telegraphing his move. These were the kind of training tips that Bruce was always talking about out of class, but I never heard them mentioned in class. The foundation for Bruce's later development is still within the Wing Chun style but it is unlikely that anyone will apply these basic concepts in a manner similar to the way that Bruce applied them.

Anyone trying to imitate Bruce today is going to have to work twice as hard as Bruce because they won't have the help of people like Yip Man who himself was a great martial artist; and Auh Hing, who according to Bruce was the best fighter in the clan; and Auh Long who Bruce thought had the potential to be better than anyone else; and all of the other Wing Chun men who helped Bruce in his development. People starting out now are at the disadvantage of not having a similar host of people to learn from.

My interaction with Bruce was very informal. I never based our association on his being better than I was in Gung Fu, nor did I feel or act as though I were in a lesser position because of his skill. Part of the reason that I got along with him so well was because he could never figure out where I was coming from. I always reacted toward him first as a friend and second as a teacher. We often had heated arguments about things not involving Gung Fu and I always maintained my position if I believed it to be correct. During our entire association I never called Bruce C-Foo and I don't think that he expected me to. If he held some position outside of Gung Fu that I thought was incorrect, I would often make it clear that I thought that he was full of crap. Bruce was never an idol to me and I responded toward him in the same manner that I responded toward my other friends. Sometimes I would get him so angry that he would jump up and down in frustration, but never was there any attempt to control the situation with physical threats.

Image was important to Bruce in the early sixties, and he was the proud owner of several different outfits. Whenever he walked into a nice place he liked to think of himself as being the best dressed person there. His wardrobe consisted of at least twenty suits and ten pair of shoes. His prize possession was a raccoonskin coat that his father had given him when he left Hong Kong to come to this country. Bruce loved to wear the coat but he put it back in mothballs when he discovered that raccoonskin coats weren't in vogue. Occasionally he would wear one of his Chinese silk jackets and a pair of slipper-like Chinese shoes. The two types of Western shoes that Bruce liked to wear were desert boots and shoes with Cuban heels. Bruce and I were the same height 5'7½" tall, and when I first met him he was very conscious of his height. He told me that the primary reason that he wore Cuban heels was because they made him an inch taller.

The one thing that he really longed for to complete his image was a sports car. Owning one was always on his mind and he mentioned it at least once a day. When I first met Bruce he couldn't drive, but Leroy Garcia, one of Bruce's first friends and students taught him to drive in a little Fiat. Bruce was as poor at driving as he was good at Gung Fu. Everytime that I rode with him I felt like the trip might be my last. Bruce would zoom up on cars and tailgate them, and whenever he pulled out to pass a car he never left enough room to pull back in if something went wrong.

The first car that Bruce owned was a black 1957 Ford. He was really proud of it and almost wore off the paint by washing it so often. Leroy Garcia the man who taught Bruce how to drive had a 1400 paper route, and I worked for him as a deliveryman. One time Leroy's pickup truck broke down and we were desparately in need of transportation to deliver the papers while the truck was being repaired. I thought of Bruce and asked him if I could use his car to deliver the route. He said that I could use it if I brought it back the next morning. The paper route was ninty miles long, and several of the papers had to be placed in tubes that stood along the side of the road. The only effective method that could be used to get the papers delivered on time was to slow down at each tube and shove a paper into it while the car was still moving. I must have gotten too close to one of the tubes and knocked off one of Bruce's mirrors. The next morning when I took the car back I parked it on the street a block from Ruby Chow's and walked to school. I wasn't aware that the mirror was gone and I thought that the car was in the same shape that it was when I borrowed it. Later I found out from Leroy that Bruce was really angry because he thought that I had conciously knocked off his mirror and didn't give a dam about his property. Bruce never said anything to me about the missing mirror and I was angry at him for not speaking his mind. The incident cooled our relationship and I didn't go around him for a long time. When I finally saw him he acted as though nothing had happened, but I couldn't forget that he hadn't felt free to speak his mind.

A while after I had dropped out of formal class Bruce told me about a offer from one of the big casinos in Reno or Vagas to put on Gung Fu demonstrations for six hundred a week. He said that he had talked to Taky about going but he wasn't able to leave Seattle, and he wanted to know if I was interested in going with him if he got the job. I told him that I would be happy to go but the job never materialized.

The whole time that I knew Bruce I was never able to score a technique on him unless he let me. The only time that I ever saw any of the students come close to scoring on him was when he was practicing against multiple man attacks. Bruce liked to have the attacks done in a realistic way and he always said to attack all out with full force. Leroy Garcia took him at his word and would come in full bore. We were practicing three man attacks and Leroy was the last person to come in. Bruce had taken a little longer than he had anticipated to block the second man and he was slow in turning to face Leroy's attack. When Bruce turned to face LeRoy he found him ready to strike, he didn't have time to do anything except plant a straight punch in the middle of Leroy's head which stopped him cold. The shock from the punch was so tramatic that Leroy was unable to turn his neck without pain for two weeks. Bruce told me that his inability to score on him was the

same situation that existed between him and Yip Man. The situation didn't change until the second time that Bruce returned to Hong Kong in the early sixties. Bruce's talks about Yip Man's skill led me to believe that he was one of the greatest Gung Fu men in the world.

During sticking hands practice with Bruce his control was so absolute that I couldn't hit him or escape from his punches no matter what I did. Three years after I had begun studying under him it was still impossible for me to withdraw my hands from his control while he was free to strike me at will. Bruce's skill at sticking hands led me to believe that it was common to the average Wing Chun man. Since then I have stuck with a few classical Wing Chun men and I have learned that Bruce's methods and skill are not common to the other members of the style. The primary difference between the two methods is Bruce's use of pressure. The classical method uses the concept of quick deflection movements, rather than the boring in pressure of Bruce's method. Only the most skillful Wing Chun men can use the deflection method with good effect. The average Wing Chun man can be over ran with forward pressure. The forward pressure concept that Bruce developed in his sticking hands is similar to what happens when you are tightening a nut with a wrench and it slips off causing your hand to strike something with a great deal of force. Bruce figured that constant pressure directed against the opponents arms would allow your hands to fly forward in the same manner as the wrench every time that your opponent failed to maintain the proper counter pressure. The good thing about Bruce's method of sticking is that it doesn't require years of practice or a great deal of skill in order to apply it in a fight. Only a few of the Classical Wing Chun people are capable of meeting and controlling a strong aggressive attack without being overwhelmed.

## Chapter 9

Looking back on Bruce's life and mine I can see that both of us were right and wrong about the effects of money and its importance. Money can give you the freedom to do what you want if you can avoid its tendency to corrupt. Money brings to the surface a lot of falseness in people, and the people who gather around those with money are usually trying to figure out ways to gain some of it. The same is true of fame. Money and fame often attract the kind of people who make one's life miserable.

Some of the stories I read about Bruce's later feelings toward money and fame let me know that many of our arguments came to pass. In one article Bruce said that he was overwhelmed with offers from people trying to capitalize on his success. He had to wear disguises in order to enjoy his privacy and he was constantly being challenged to fight. These statements led me to believe that he wasn't happy with the situation that he had created, and was in the process of moving toward a more obscure personal life.

The greatest drive behind Bruce was his desire to be someone special. I always knew that he wasn't a person to remain hidden in the shadows. I felt that some day he would project himself into the public eye but I thought that his appearance on the American scene would be in the form of a martial arts master rather than an actor. I still feel that the only people who really understand the depth of Bruce's skill are those who have stood before his fists and feet. All of the film of the world isn't worth a live demonstration of how helpless anyone was when they worked out with Bruce.

When Bruce finally made it to the top I was proud to know someone who had made it. I was sorry to learn that his stay there wasn't as comfortable as it could have been, and wished that I had maintained a closer relationship with the man because I might have been able to help him protect himself from the wolf pack.

Bruce's pride was so great that he would never allow anything or anybody to control him. I always felt that this attitude was directly related to the great amount of reality testing that he had done in the martial arts. He had tried to develop all possible defense responses in order to respond to any type of attack, but he was never satisfied with how well he could do. His Gung Fu attitudes colored his thinking in other areas and he always felt that few of the people around him had developed his level of awareness in any area.

Bruce's personal philosophy was based on a self reliance which prompted people to react toward him in a superficial way. The famous people who he later interacted with didn't understand him or where he was coming from. At this stage of his development he dealt with his students from the position of a Chinese Gung Fu teacher. Unfortunately most of these people didn't understand the nature of their role as students. The fact that they had money and position had no bearing on the relationship, the teacher was the teacher and the student was the student and each party was expected to act accordingly.

Some of the articles written by his former students seem to say that they should have been given special treatment because they were famous. With this concept in their minds it is easy to see why and how they had so many misunderstandings with Bruce. They didn't realize that they were



dealing with a one of a kind person. No where on Earth could they have found someone with Bruce's skill in the art of Gung Fu.

One of the first things that I learned from Bruce was that his techniques are for fighting and not for show. The style is designed for real use and it is very functional if used solely for this purpose. Anyone trying the same techniques on a person several times is foolish if he thinks that the other person isn't going to devise some effective defense against his attacks. If you don't actually strike when you attack, you open yourself up to be effectively countered.

Bruce evolved from a system that had no sparring, only fighting. He was well versed in a real fighting attitude before he evolved to his later position of sparring. None of the people that Bruce taught have reached a skill level that allows them to be successful in sparring without contact. Sparring for Bruce was an out growth of his fighting skill rather than something that he sat out to do. Several times he told me that sparring was a useless concept if contact wasn't allowed. To effectively come in and hit someone who is trained in the same art is extremely difficult, and it requires more skill than most martial artist will ever acquire. Taky Kimura told me in 1973 that the only two people that Bruce felt had ever learned anything were him and me, and neither of us is even close to the skill level that Bruce possessed when he first came to Seattle in 1959.

One of the tragedies of Bruce's death is that much of what was in his mind went to the grave with him. The people who studied under him are not trying to evolve to their own natural style like Bruce, but are trying to copy the exact moves that he was making at the time of his death. Without the background training that Bruce had in Classical Gung Fu it is doubtful that many of these people will ever develop into function fighters.

Anyone wishing to know how Bruce would have moved in a real fight should take a look at his movie Return of the Dragon. Some of the techniques that he used against Chuck Norris are the kind of techniques that he would have done in a real situation, except that in a real situation the fight would have ended so quickly that Norris would have never known what happened. If Bruce had gotten real in the movies he would have moved in and finished a fight with one punch. Bruce knew that one shot moves with the hands don't look as spectacular as sweeping kicks with the legs so he emphasized kicking in his movies. His strongest move was a straight lunge, and I'm sure that none in the world would have been able to stop his execution once he was in range.

In the early sixties Bruce told me that he was going to base his Gung Fu on the Japanese concept of Jiu Jitsu. Jiu Jitsu schools stressed that you use anything that will work whenever you have the chance. Bruce's Jeet Kune Do was an outgrowth of this concept. If during the course of a fight you had the opportunity to stick your finger in your opponent's eye you poke him rather than draw back your fist and hit him. Bruce demonstrated this concept in his last movie Enter The Dragon. When Roper's Opponent had him pinned to the ground he didn't do anything fancy, he did what was most direct, he bit the opponent's leg. Bruce also used any available weapon whenever he had the opportunity. Bruce's Jeet Kune Do might be better called the art of staying alive. When Bruce tricked the Karateman who wanted to fight him into getting into a boat, which he let trail out behind the

junk that it was attacked to, he demonstrated that Jeet Kune Do also includes the use of mental process to win encounters. Jeet Kune Do is not just technique but a way to approach life, that requires you to live and think the same way. The Jeet Kune Do concept will be followed by very few people because of the commitment to constant self examination that is required.

Some of the things that Bruce was trying to get across to the public were not to waste time talking about things that you can not do; don't clutter your mind with complexity when simplicity will do; and that there can be no gains without lots of hard work.

Bruce felt that complexity and simplicity are parts of the same circle, and that the understanding of one is dependent on the understanding of the other. Whenever Bruce set out to master a technique he always found the initial learning to be complex. The move was strange to his neural system and several mistakes were made each time it was attempted. After a few hundred repetitions his body began to smooth out the technique so that it flowed with little effort. What was once complex had now become simple, except that the move still lacked the power and the speed that it needed to make it effective. Once again Bruce had to return to the complex process of adding force and speed to the movement, which required further changes in the neural system. Tens of thousands of repetitions later the technique became effortless for Bruce and he was able to once again regard it as a simple move, until he tried to explain it to someone else. Few people can grasp what Bruce meant when he said that he finally realized how easy it is to perform a technique once that you know how.

Bruce had a strong admiration for anyone who was tops in any area that involved physical or mental development. He felt that these were the only people who could really understand and appreciate his concepts because they had followed a developmental path similar to his.

Bruce was always seeking a better way to do something, and he felt that the only time that he could be satisfied with any level of development was when he was dead. Whenever he reached a projected level of development he would push on to the next. He never allowed himself to be satisfied with any of his achievements and was driven to succeed in a manner that could never be completely gratified. Bruce was a slave to the dream he pursued, and any deviation from his goal of being the best Gung Fu man in the world was extremely uncomfortable, until he forced himself to get back on track.

In his movies Bruce did everything, but when he would have done in a real fight. He kicked to the head, leaped into the air when he kicked, and did summersaults and backflips. The only real techniques in Bruce's movies were the straight direct attacks. I think that the action in Bruce's movies was great, but I'm sure that those among you who are knowledgeable about martial arts can appreciate that while the moves were real in the sense that they were done by Bruce without the aid of a camera, he would never have leaped into the air during an attack.

The way that Bruce worked his way into a fighting stance was taken from some of the Japanese movies that we watched. In the sword fighting movies the foot movements were done to insure the swordsman that he had a good grip on the ground. For Bruce, the foot movements were a signal

that he was getting ready for action. Bruce knew that if he showed what he really would have done in a fight that few people would have found it impressive to watch someone hit the ground and not know how they got there. He also knew that no one wants to look at kicks to the knee no matter how fast or deadly they are, people want to see someone do something that they can't do.

In 1960 Bruce was fascinated by the Southern Mantis weapon called the Peacock Eye, and he developed callouses on both middle knuckles of his first fingers, by tapping on any available hard surface. He turned away from using the Peacock Eye when he discovered that no amount of callous would protect his knuckles from the impact of a hard punch. Bruce also had callouses on the last three knuckles of his right hand which are the trade mark of a good Wing Chun man. These three callouses were developed on Wing Chun's round sandbag.

Bruce spent time practicing with iron rings around his wrist, until his punches became so powerful that the rings would snap off. He gave up the rings for a set of hand weights that Skip Ellsworth had made for me. Bruce said that he wanted to borrow them and that was the last time that I saw them. He trained his grip with the Eagle Claw method of gripping a wide mouth jar at the top and waving it around, weight was gradually added to the jar to make it more difficult to grip. Two techniques that Bruce took from the Choy Li Fut were Chop Choy and Goon Choy. Bruce took a lot of techniques from other styles, but the form that he liked to demonstrate most often was one from the Southern Mantis. Bruce did part of this form in the movie "Return of the Dragon". People with a broad background in martial arts can go through Bruce's techniques and pick out things from a wide variety of styles. Bruce always stressed that he wasn't inventing anything new, just putting things together differently.

Bruce could watch someone make a move, master it and figure out a better way to do it. This ability constantly made people angry because it made them appear as though they didn't know anything.

He always talked about using the fingers as an attack and defensive weapon, but he could never figure out a safe way to use them. He felt that the fingers were a better weapon than the fist because they added to the reach and were able to slip into areas where a fist would be blocked. The four inch difference in length between the fingers and your fist can shorten the gape if your arm is shorter than your opponent's. The major problem with using the fingers is their tendency to bend and be injured whenever they encounter hard objects. This was the primary factor in the sixties that prevented Bruce from becoming a strong advocate of finger strikes.

Taky told me in 1973 that Bruce at the time of his death was able to thrust clean holes through paper with his fingers and that he was working on thrusting his fingers through wood. Taky said that he was told that pieces of board were found at Bruce's home in Hong Kong that contained deep impressions of Bruce's finger tips.

Bruce had small hands and he often experienced training problems whenever he hit something hard. He could punch extremely hard but I always felt that if he were to hit anyone's head as hard as he could that his hand would have shattered. One incident that demonstrated the power of his punch happened in California when he was working out with James Lee.

James Lee in addition to being a Gung Fu man was a welder. He made up some head gear and he wanted Bruce to test it. Bruce told James that he didn't think that it was a good idea for him to test the gear while James was wearing it, but James insisted and Bruce finally gave it a try.

In a earlier test the mask had withstood several blows from a small sledge hammer, but Bruce punched it with less than full force. It turned out that this was a very wise move on Bruce's part because his punch caved in the mask until it was pressing into Jame's face. Bruce said that the mask was made from heavy steel rods, and the way that it collapsed convinced him that he had reached a level of punching power that could never be fully directed toward another human being unless he were trying to kill him.

Bruce kept a diary of all the things that he discovered and he told me more than once that he wished that they gave Nobel prizes for the development of fighting systems, because he was sure than he would win one. Bruce never overcame his fear that teaching someone all that he knew would be somehow used against him, but even though he was fearful of the way that his information would be used he had too much of an ego not to have revealed a large part of his system. His talks, demonstrations, articles, and movies are full of his concepts, training methods, and techniques. The only thing that's missing are labels and guideposts telling you which way to go.

People have often said that Bruce's skill was the result of natural ability. I maintain that most of what Bruce accomplished was the result of hard work, good instruction, and a hell of a lot of research and experimentation. I further maintain that anyone with the same drive, instruction and research could accomplish the same thing. Bruce told me several times that most of what he could do was the result of hard work. His accomplishments in Gung Fu paralleled those of athletes in other areas. Champion athletes train very hard before the season begins. Bruce trained every day as though he were preparing for the Olympics. The only people who train with the same intensity are professional dancers. Their careers often span several years well into middle age, and they are often able to do routines that younger stronger dancers are unable to do. Dancers become more economical with age and experience and so did Bruce.

Bruce's blinding closing speed enabled him to circumvent most kicks and blocks. He was on you before you could react, and the instant that his arms touched you he would establish control with sticking hands. His sticking was so powerful that once he touched your arms you were unable to escape, or make any kind of offensive move.

One outstanding characteristic that separated Bruce from other martial artists was the fact that he wasn't style or culture bound. This free attitude allowed him to take moves from other arts and use them to his best advantage. Bruce's footwork was a prime example of his mixing of styles. He borrowed from Gung Fu, Karate, Fencing, and Boxing and adapted the parts into a system that suited him.

One of Bruce's major concepts was that when you try to surpass someone who has done something for a number of years you will have to go beyond what the other person does by going outside of the system that they practice. In order to be successful your own skill in the same system must be close to that of the person that you are trying to surpass, before you venture

outside of the system. This was the basic concept that Bruce used to surpass the top people in Wing Chun sticking hands. The first thing that he did was become one of the best stickers in the clan. It became apparent to him that he won't be able to surpass those above him by doing the same techniques that they did, because they had so many more years of experience at classical sticking and he concluded that the most progressive approach to mastering the art would be to develop ways to penetrate classical sticking.

The first concept that Bruce came up with was continuous pressure all the way through the sticking hand movements. Any attempt by an opponent to go outside of the tight pressure structure resulted in a forward strike by his pressing hands. The pressure is maintained throughout the rotation movements of sticking hands and the opponent's failure to maintain equal counter pressure and the correct hand positions will instantly permit him to be hit by one of your forward pressing hands. Bruce further modified his sticking by eliminating all but four of the classical hand positions, and incorporating a backfist in place of some classical straight punches. The final thing that he did was to concentrate all of his energy on developing maximum pressure in his sticking. Once he felt secure about his modifications he began to think of calling his method something other than Wing Chun. His final formations were so different that he felt they no longer fit into the concepts of classical Wing Chun.

The concepts that Bruce formulated are easy to understand, but difficult to put into practice. Bruce's roots were in the instruction that he received from the top four people in the Wing Chun style. The four years that he spent studying under this kind of instruction is the equivalent of ten or twelve years of hard practice under a single instructor without the advantage of seeing four extremely skillful people apply the same principles. Bruce was well aware of the effect that learning from these four people had on him, and he often said that the instruction that he received from these people made it difficult not to succeed.

Bruce's hatred of losing provided him with the motivation that he needed to keep practicing. This side of his nature caused him a lot of social problems, but it was also one of the things that made him great. Whenever he would grow tired of practicing he would whip himself back into line by thinking about losing. Bruce can best be understood by closely looking at Chinese history and philosophy. He was a walking quotation of Chinese thinking and writing and was forever trying to turn myth into reality.

Other martial artists who did the same thing that Bruce did on a much larger scale were Jiguro Kano (the founder of Judo) and Morihei Uyeshiba (the founder of Aikido). Both of these great masters developed their systems by going outside of traditional lines and borrowing from other styles. When these masters finally firmed up the systems that they wanted to teach they left out the main ingredient that had made their methods successful, the willingness to endure tremendous physical pain and psychological frustration. In both of these men's search for the way there was a continual testing and experimenting with various mixtures of techniques in ways that had not been previously tried. When the two masters instructed students they insisted that they adhere to their exact methods and disallowed experimentation, something that they themselves would never have agreed to.

When Bruce first taught in Seattle he based his teaching concepts on the inherent differences that existed among the students. Instead of having everyone do each technique the same way he tried to get each person to adapt the movement to their own particular body structure and style of movement. None of the students paid much attention to this concept and they all tried to imitate his moves. He finally grew tired of telling people to modify each technique to suit themselves and let them do what ever they wanted. Bruce felt in 1959 and 60 that students should discard things that they couldn't make work and pursue something more feasible. He said that this could mean the elimination of a few techniques, or the studying of a new method.

Sometimes people try to learn systems that are not compatible with their personalities, or body structure. They may be a passive personality in a system that calls for them to be aggressive, or an aggressive personality in a system that calls for them to be passive. Most people trying to learn a style that isn't compatible with their basic personality will never learn to effectively execute it because of the negative internal feelings that they must continually work against. An example is someone who doesn't believe in maiming other humans no matter what the circumstances. It would be impossible for this type of person to learn something like Jeet Kune Do or Jiu Jitsu which are based on the use of the weapon that will be most effective at the moment of application.

Bruce felt that proper skill development depends on formal instruction under a competent teacher (competence is defined here as the ability of the teacher to perform the system that he is instructing). He also believed that once you became proficient in a method that you should take a hard look at it's basic principles, and ask yourself why each technique has to be performed in the manner that the style advocates. Experiment with various techniques and see if they can be effectively modified to fit you and your own particular set of circumstances. If you are studying martial arts because you live in an area where it is difficult to avoid street encounters your approach to martial arts will probably be a lot different from someone's approach who is training primarily for controlled contests, with referees, and rules. Whatever your reason for studying martial arts you should bend the art to fit you. Techniques that don't work well for you should be discarded for substitutes that do work.

Martial artists in the United States are usually larger and stronger than their Asian counterparts. In the striking arts this is a definite advantage that allows them to hit harder with less practice. It would be difficult to deny that the skill of the average practitioner of a striking art in the Far East is greater than that of the average American, but I would argue that the goal of the average American is less in the direction of art and more in the direction of practical application. Things like practicing without footwear are not practical in this country. In the Orient many people wear soft or no footwear and kicking without shoes might be justified. In America almost everyone wears shoes, and part of each kicking practice should involve kicking with shoes on to acquaint the students with the difference in weight and balance. A pair of thick soled shoes can make an average kick very effective in the streets if the kicker is accustomed to kicking with shoes.

One of the things that Bruce repeatedly pointed out was that in training

you should be less concerned with looks and more concerned with how something works. He pointed out that I might never have a kick that would satisfy a purest, but that it isn't necessary to possess a Classical looking kick in order to have a kick that works. He told me that the development of my own personal expression of Gung Fu could lead me to highly individualized techniques that would aid me in a tense situation.

Bruce always stressed seeking out the weak portions of any method and turning them into strengths. He meant that you should take movements that are naturally weak because of the body's structure and concentrate on making them strong. One example that he gave me was the Wing Chun development of a short effective punch, that could be thrown from a short distance without telegraphing. Most punches that are thrown from a short distance aren't very powerful so the majority of punches are thrown from a distance with full arm extension to increase the power. Wing Chun figured out that short direct non-telegraphing punches could be made effective if enough of them were delivered in a manner that would cause an accumulative jarring effect, and knock the person out. Thus she turned weakness into strength by developing a method that made short punches effective.

Bruce felt that several people using different training methods could all end up doing a technique the same way if each person continued to modify their moves. He also believed that the practice of technique is not enough, and that it must be supplemented with physical development. The physical development should include both ancient and modern methods of developing speed, power, endurance, and increased tolerance to pain.

The modern martial artist should explore the techniques weightlifting, boxing, wrestling, track and any other area that can lead to better performance. He should strive to become as fast as possible without the loss of power, flexible without the loss of strength, and aggressive without the loss of control. People willing to sacrifice and work hard toward these goals can find martial arts a very rewarding pursuit.

Some people come to martial arts seeking a symbol that they can use to impress other people. Often these people have their arts turned against them. They wear badges and symbols that allow other people to know that they practice some kind of martial art, and when they get into an encounter their opponent has that advantage of knowing that they are trained in some thing. This knowledge can result in the opponent fighting with non-natural weapons.

The primary goal of martial arts is self-protection, a goal that cannot be achieved when people openly invite conflict by wearing in public, symbols and badges that denote their practice of some self defense method.

In America many martial artists discount the type of street attacks that they should be training for. Attacks in this country are likely to be made by someone who doesn't adhere to any type of social code of combat. When this type of person attacks he has but one thought in mind; the subjugation of you to his will. This may involve taking your money, raping your girl friend or wife, or taking your life. In an encounter with this type of person, most of what you have learned in a Classical martial arts setting is not going to work. Street muggers don't attack from stances, not are they scared by the fact that you assume one.

Training in this country should focus on how to handle sneak punches to the head, kicks, and knees to the groin, fingers to the eyes, heavy roundhouse swings, clubs, sticks, knives, and grabs from the rear. Street fighters can take tremendous amounts of punishment and still keep coming, and unless you really hurt them they can and will get you. Kicks to the groin and jabs to the eyes don't always spell success, unless they are followed by a strong attack. Most of the time these techniques will work but you shouldn't train for what works most of the time. You should train for the toughest situation that you can imagine; combat with someone who is fast, strong, mean, and intent on your destruction.

A glance at the western game of football shows the kind of punishment that humans are capable of withstanding. In every game players take the full force of elbow smashes and remain standing. The forearm smash of the average high school lineman is every bit as strong as the punch of a good martial artist. It isn't safe to depend on the success of any one blow unless your punches and kicks are truly exceptional. Bruce had the type of weapons that could end an encounter with one blow but it took him several years of hard work and experimentation with body mechanics before he developed the tremendous power and speed that he was eventually able to put into his movements. Bruce's speed and power came from the development of gymnastic-like muscles and tendon strength, which he combined with leg and body twisting. His power finally reached a level where the impact of his punch was like that of a steel ball attached to the tip of a whip. No one else that I have heard of has spent the same time and effort that Bruce spent developing his power. Bruce tried so many different exercises that it became impossible for him to know or relate to all of the steps involved in it's development. He used weights to develop his shoulder and upper back, and punched a tetherball until he could hit it all out without missing a punch for several minutes, for accuracy. Whenever he discovered an exercise that continued to give good results he incorporated it into his permanent daily workout.

Bruce taught me that the first thing that I had to do whenever I was confronted with a fighting situation was to make an intellectual decision as to whether the situation warrants fighting. If the opponent is moving toward you in a menacing way you have little choice but to react with everything that you have at your disposal. Fortunately most situations allow you time to extract yourself before they explode into conflict. You must learn to read and recognize negative situations before you become entrapped in them. Bruce felt that only a fool goes to places where fights commonly occur, and anyone who places themselves in this type of situation deserves anything that happens to them. The major point that Bruce was trying to make is that to insure the greatest margin of safety one has to live defensively. This may sound harsh to people who have never experienced violence, but it only has to happen once to seriously effect your life.

The worst feeling in the world is to be caught in a situation not of your own making and be unable to produce the needed responses to survive without enduring a great deal of physical and psychological pain. At one time or another we have all found ourselves in situations where we have asked, "What am I doing here?", and wished that we were someplace else. Unfortunately all the wishing in the world couldn't change the situation, and



we were forced to face that with which we were confronted. All we could do was hope that the situation didn't damage us too much before it let us go. Bruce's advice was to see these negative patterns developing and head in the other direction.

A lot of people have called Bruce a user and this is probably a true statement, however it does need to be qualified. Bruce never used anyone without attempting to give that person something in return and usually what he gave was more valuable than what he took. Unfortunately most people didn't recognize or use his gifts. People have called Bruce arrogant and again I must agree that in some ways this was true, but I would argue that he had every right to be arrogant after all that he endured to reach his final skill level. When it came to martial arts Bruce could do anything that he said he could do and this was a constant source of irritation to a lot of people.

People's lack of appreciation for reality was something that Bruce couldn't handle very well. It always upset him when he met someone who couldn't see what was directly in front of their eyes. Most of the time when Bruce demonstrated his art to someone they would try to reject his method and say that their's was better, even after he had clearly nullified their every move. Several of these people were teachers in other styles and they would often say that they didn't have to worry about people who used the same kind of principles that Bruce used because they were training to defend against the average person and not someone with a lot of skill. Bruce would always ask them how they determined who was an average person and whether their technique would work against him.

Whenever Bruce demonstrated his art to other people he wasn't trying put down their entire system, he merely wanted to show them how they could make the same basic moves in a safer manner with better results. I was really amazed when I read that one of Bruce's later students didn't understand him at all. Bruce was Chinese and Chinese are deeply concerned with the concept of face. This student said that he couldn't understand why Bruce didn't defer to him because he was famous and in a position to help Bruce in his acting career. I was shocked. Where in martial arts have you ever heard of a teacher playing up to his students? It is always the other way around and this man didn't understand the teacher-student relationship.

When Bruce came back to Seattle from the Long Beach tournament where he put on a demonstration, (he did not compete as so many people erroneously reported) he came by my house. He said that someone had taken pictures of the demonstration and that his punches were faster than the camera could record. He said that his punch was a blurr to it's extension, then the image of the fist appeared and vanished as it returned to it's original starting point. This was the first time that Bruce had ever seen external shots of his movement and he was really pleased with what he saw.

One of the last times that I saw Bruce was the day that he brought his son over to have a look at him. Bradon was a blond haired blue eyed baby and Bruce was prouder than hell about having a son. He showed me a mole on Brandon's back and told me that it was a common mark on all Eurasian children. He told me that he was being considered for a T.V. series called the "Second Son of Charlie Chan", but it never came to pass. When I talked

to him after he had landed the part of Kato in the "Green Hornet", he told me that the studio had signed him to a five year contract at the sum of eight hundred a week. He told Leroy Garcia and I that his hard work was finally starting to pay off. We talked for a while about my moving to California to help him teach and he told me that I would have to train my legs and develop more flexibility in my lower body. I told him that I would be willing to train hard if I came down to California. His parting comment was that he had shown me the road to follow to achieve success in Gung Fu and that it was up to me to develop my own method of application.

Looking back on some of the things that he use to talk about, I can see that much of his motivation came from reading about the exploits of the famous old masters. Most of his effort in Gung Fu were the result of trying to do the things that they were said to have done. His advancement in Wing Chun always made me wonder if he was just another Wing Chun man who carried the art to it's highest level of expression, or if he were indeed on a path of his own making. Over the years I have entertained both positions, and I have come to believe that he stuck pretty close to the Wing Chun basic principles. I would really like to see some of the top Wing Chun men that he trained with so that I could compare their techniques to Bruce's.

Today I would be satisfied with the skill level that Bruce had when he first came to the States in 1959. During this period Bruce was very open and most of the techniques that he taught applied to people with less skill than he possessed. Years later several of the techniques that he taught were more applicable to himself than to anyone else. There is little doubt that Bruce's later techniques were an improvement over his earlier modified Wing Chun techniques, but I have to ask how does the body and mind develop the necessary response patterns to make these advanced moves work. The moves worked fine for Bruce because they unfolded naturally for him as his body development moved into new areas. Each step of Bruce's improvement was predicated on the technique that proceeded it. When the techniques were passed on to others in the late sixties there was no comparable foundation to build on, and the things that for Bruce were devastating techniques became icing over plain cake for others. This is not to say that the techniques that he did can't be done by others, but the basic methods for learning them weren't put forth in ways that can be readily seen and understood.

It seems logical to me that if a man's learning is the result of learning several different steps, anyone else desiring the same kind of learning would have to go through a similar process. Bruce's basic approach to learning was to first learn the basics of a discipline and practice until he understood them well. His next step was to improve on the basics through experimentation. For Bruce this meant that no principle was sacred and that everything is subject to change and examination.

After I drifted away from Bruce's formal classes my brother Mike kept coming around and Bruce was gracious enough to teach him in his spare moments. Mike became so influenced by Bruce that today he is well on the way to a similar level of development. Today Mike is by far the best of Bruce's students.

When I learned that Bruce had died I was really sad. My first reaction to the newspaper article was that there had to be some mistake. Leroy

Garcia was the one that brought the news to me on Saturday morning. The only thing that I could say was, "why did this have to happen to him when he was just starting to make it, in all of the ways that he had worked so hard for?" After several other friends showed me news accounts of Bruce's death I began the long slow process of making myself believe that Bruce was dead and that no power on earth was going to bring him back. I talked to Taky about what had happened and he told me that he had talked to Bruce's mother-in-law and Jhoon Rhee, the Washington D.C. Tae Kwon Do man. Jhoon Rhee had been in Hong Kong filming a picture and he had stayed at Bruce's. Taky said that Rhee had told him that Bruce's manner had been changing over the past few months and that he wasn't the same person that he had previously been. Bruce was said to be nervous, suspicious, and difficult to get along with. Both Rhee and Bruce's mother-in-law told Taky that the major factor in Bruce's death seemed to have resulted from his pushing himself to hard. At the time of Bruce's death his body weight was down to 127 lbs. and several people have tried to make something of it. I would like to remind these people that Bruce weighed 132 lbs. when I first met him and I'm sure that he wasn't then in the maximum physical condition that he was at the time of his death. Other people have claimed that he was the victim of a delayed death touch or that his death was the result of some kind of poison. To these people I say, "bullshit!" They are just trying to make a name for themselves by stirring up idle speculation.

I didn't realize the full impact of Bruce's death until I went to the funeral. I was unable to conceal the emotions that surged to the surface and I broke down and cried like a baby. When I looked into the coffin and saw the pale imitation of what used to be Bruce I felt a wild anger and the need to strike out at something. On my way out the door I struck out at a base of flowers. After the casket was lowered into the ground everybody except Skip, Ed, Mike and me left hurriedly. After Skip and Ed left, Mike and I stuck around, and when the workmen came to fill the grave we took over the shovels because it didn't seem right that Bruce should be covered by strange hands. While we were filling the grave Fook Young came and threw in a handfull of dirt in a final farewell to Bruce. At the completion of our task Mike and I cried together and vowed not to let the things that we learned perish. Perhaps I can do for Bruce in death what I failed to do for him in life.

## Flashback and Bits and Pieces

After I broke away from Bruce we had several Gung Fu schools. When I asked him how he felt about my teaching he told me that it was alright as long as I didn't call what I taught Wing Chun or Jeet Kune Do. Our first school was in the basement of the New Richmond Hotel. Leroy Garcia, Jim Demile, and I were the teachers and we kept the school open for five months. We practiced five nights a week and pushed our students hard. Our basic workout was built around a thousand kicks per night, followed by one or two thousand punches. We had our students so sore the first two weeks that they could hardly walk. The people who stayed to learn didn't look very fancy, but they could defend themselves. We called our method Shindo.

The second school was with Jim Demile and my brother on Pike street in 1963. I did most of the teaching and Mike assisted while Jim did most of the recruitment for students. We kept this school open for Six months and moved to a new location two blocks away. We called our school the Seattle Martial Arts Academy. Our emblem was a Black Mantis with red eyes on a white background. It was designed by Ernest Allen a close friend and student of mine. The fee that we charged at all of these schools was fifteen dollars a month. Another school that I taught at was Nate Long's Judo School on 23rd and Dearborn. My brother Mike was an assistant instructor at all of these schools.

This was a period when Gung Fu was almost unheard of, and Karate was on the rise. Bruce was living and teaching at a school on University Way, and he was having difficulty keeping students. I don't think that Bruce ever had over forty or fifty students because his method wasn't flashy, and it didn't involve board or brick breaking.

When I first met him his punching power emanated from his wrists; as time passed it progressed first to the elbow, then to the shoulder and the upper back, and finally to the waist and the feet. His method was to develop as much power as he could in each of the body parts and then move on to the next.

The first time that Bruce went to California to visit James Lee he was introduced to Ralph Castro and Ed Parker. He said that he had demonstrated his technique for them and that they seemed to be impressed with many of the things that he could do. This was the first real contact that he had with the Karate world and he was rather impressed by what he saw. When he came back to Seattle he said that everyone had told him that he was wasting his time teaching in the northwest.

One of Bruce's natural skills was speed afoot; he could sprint very fast for fifty yards and then his wind would give out. One of the things that prevented him from jogging when I knew him was an injured ankle that reacted poorly to the stress of running.

His right hand was his major punching hand and it looked foreign to the rest of his body because of the well calloused knuckles. His left hand was normal, and he used to say that he was saving it for dancing.

In one magazine I read that Bruce was ashamed of his European blood and told noone about it. All of his first students knew about it, and he seemed to be proud rather than ashamed. The same article said that he was challenged once at a demonstration and that he insisted on fighting then and there. The article went on to say that the fight lasted two seconds. I

referred the fight and it didn't happen like that at all. There has been so much misinformation written about Bruce that it would take an entire book to respond to it.

Much has happened with Bruce since I started writing about his life and actions, but none of the stories have given me the feeling that the authors had a good feeling for Bruce. The first pocket book that I read about Bruce wasn't very personal. It seemed like the work of someone who had taken a few commonly known facts and built a story around them. The book contained little mention of the inner workers of Bruce's personality and mind. A couple of the magazine type books that were written about Bruce were nothing more than a composite of freely available pictures around which a story was written. They often stretched the truth or told it incorrectly. Bruce was said to have appeared in the 1964 Long Beach tournament as a participant when he was really there as a demonstrator. One leading martial artist was quoted as saying that the best thing that he could say about Bruce was that his elbows popped whenever he threw a punch. This statement is hardly a complement to the man. I have one quarter of Bruce's skill, yet my elbows pop when I punch. The man's comment is tantamount to saying that Ali is great because he can take a punch to the body. Other martial artists gave the impression that they possessed skill that was equal to or better than Bruce's. To all of this rhetoric I have but one comment, "Bullshit!"

Bruce could move faster and hit harder than any martial artist in this country, and there was a strong possibility that he hit harder and moved faster than any martial artist in the world. For those among you who have doubts about Bruce's speed I would suggest that you view his movements on film and video tape. Some of these movements are so fast that they can only be seen by viewing the film one frame at a time. If viewing these films and tapes doesn't convince you I would suggest that you tape the movements of someone that you feel moves faster and compare their movements frame per frame to Bruce's movements. In order to make the test valid get the filming and taping speeds from the television studio that filmed him on "Long Street", and Warner Communications, the studio that filmed "Enter the Dragon".

I am not surprised by most of the people who spoke out against Bruce, but I was surprised by the people who had learned something from him and weren't honest enough to give him credit as a master of execution. One comment that sticks in my mind is the absurd claim that Bruce would have been among the top five lightweight tournament fighters, if he were to compete today. The truth is that Bruce would have defeated any of the people competing in this country and perhaps anyone in the world of any size. Another comment that sticks in my mind is about stopping Bruce's backfist. I don't think that the event happened, and if it did happen, what does it mean? Could the same person have stopped an attack by Bruce? I think not.

Even the book written by his wife contained some errors. Bruce was never friends with the Karateman who he fought in Seattle, and when the man asked him for private instruction he told him that he would have to join the formal class and practice the same things that the other students were practicing. When James Lee came to Seattle to visit Bruce the Karate man

thought that he practiced the same technique as Bruce and tried to get him to teach privately. James Lee also turned down the man's request for private lessons.

Another error that appeared in the book was that Bruce had stayed with James Lee when he first came to the United States. The truth of the matter is that Bruce didn't meet James Lee until 1962. Anyone wanting to check this out should read the article, "Special Gung Fu Training Devices", written by David Cox. The article is about James Lee training methods and Lee is quoted as saying that he met Bruce through his brother in 1962.

The final thing that upset me was the Tao of Gung Fu. The book is at best a poor joke on a great martial artist. It would have been much better if it hadn't been edited, and just published as his notes. I'm afraid that much of what could have been learned from Bruce's notes has been lost to editing. Most of what was published as Bruce's training methods was nothing more than notes and reminders to himself. Ninety-five percent of the book is stuff that he did and talked about while he was still living in Seattle. There is little in the book that will help a beginner develop basic skills, and much of the text is open to broad interpretation. The best that can be said about the book is that isn't a book written by Bruce but a rather poor interpretation of his notes. If Bruce had written the book it wouldn't have included most of what's contained in the Tao of Jeet Kune Do.

Most of Bruce's technique resulted from his training methods, and the successful application of his art depends on the way that a person trains to practice these techniques. If moves are practiced with speed and power you will improve your fighting skill. If you train as though there is some strength building mechanism in the techniques themselves, you will probably learn very little that is applicable, against a strong opponent.

In the near future I hope to write a book on the techniques that I learned from Bruce and more important the way in which I learned them. I feel that the method that I learned from Bruce in Seattle is a viable one that can be beneficial to the average person's martial arts improvement. I have taught these techniques to well over four hundred people and several of them have used them to good effect. The techniques that I taught my students are not tournament techniques, they are fighting techniques of the first order that have been tried and tested in the streets by people of various skill levels with a great deal of success.

I have found these techniques to work well for people with aggression problems because they allow them to end a fight without too much damage to their opponent. I have watched several aggressive and hostile students change their attitude toward fighting once they became skilled in the system. They learned to control their aggression in most situations and when they did feel forced to lash out at someone they learned to stop punching once the opponent became helpless. Prior to their training they would beat on an opponent with any available object and the results of the on-slaught often left permanent damage, and a possible jail term.

The techniques also work well for people who have been taught to be overly passive. These people learn to express the pent up aggression and hostility that they have hidden for a long time. The confidence that they develop from practicing is really a nice thing to watch, because they find that they can express themselves without the fear of being intimidated by openly aggressive people.

People who fall between these two extremes experience various degrees of success, but they generally don't have the motivation to stick to the training long enough to gain a good grasp of how the techniques should be applied. It's really too bad that few people stick around long enough to learn the basis of the method because it can give them a strong psychological base to operate from.

My best student was my brother Mike Lee. I started teaching him when he was eleven and took him to most of the practice sessions that I had with Bruce. Mike was often around when Bruce came over to my house and Bruce developed a strong liking for him. When Mike was a junior in high school he moved in with me, and I really started putting him through the paces. My aim in training my brother was to drive him to a level of competence where he could hold his own against anyone. I'm sure that during this period he thought that I was his worst enemy because I drove him far beyond what he thought was his limits. I wouldn't stop attacking him when he got tired because I wanted him to learn that you can't stop in the middle of a fight and expect to win. Sometimes I would hold him pinned to the floor until he would come roaring up like an enraged tiger.

When Mike was nineteen he started to practice several hours each day, and I began to challenge every idea or technique that he came up with. I was determined to force him into making his own decisions based on a solid assessment of the existing circumstances. My brother is one of the few people in the world that I love and I wanted him to develop a strong belief in his own solutions to problems.

At nineteen Mike's techniques were fast and smooth, but lacking in the kind of power that he desired. Mike turned to weightlifting to develop this power, and within a couple of months he was bench pressing two hundred pounds several times each day. Two hundred pounds doesn't seem like too much weight to benchpress, but Mike was doing two hundred repetitions at every training session. He was also doing large numbers of pushups and situps, and running between 15 and 25 miles a day.

The real turning point for Mike came when he started to teach his friends. He ran around with four or five guys and he got all of them involved in Gung Fu. I was stronger than Mike so he had to create methods to get around my strength advantage. He had tried to strengthen the Wing Chun hand positions, but they didn't work very well against my aggressive moves. Mike figured out a way to practice sticking hands with a bicycle inner tube and his sticking started to improve.

When he started to train his friends he began to learn a lot about training methods and the best ways to move. His workouts with his friends were conducted in the same hand manner that he had learned from me because he wanted his friends to be the best that they could be.

Part of Mike's training involved putting on head gear and going several non-stop rounds with his students. Often he would go as many as thirty rounds without stopping. Half of the rounds were spent ducking the blows of his students. He would let them punch at him while he restricted himself to blocking and moving away from their blows. When Mike did attack he would punch their arms and bang into them with his shoulders.

These were hard workouts and lots of the people dropped out. He finally opened his class up to other people who wanted to learn, but few of

them could stand the pace. This was a period when the things that he taught bore a strong resemblance to my method of instruction.

Mike's progress led him to believe that he was never going to catch me sticking hands unless he changed his way of sticking and that was what he did. It didn't happen all at once for him and he had to work his ass off, but he did come up with a new approach to sticking. When Mike was twenty four he decided that he wanted to teach Gung Fu commercially and so he opened a school. Mike's new concept of sticking is far easier for the average student than the old way and his experiments with new concepts of sticking have led to more functional ways of teaching Bruce's concepts to students. The results are the same but the long hard grind that I used in my approach to teach is missed from his method and his students seem to progress much better than they did under the old method.

Mike's first discoveries led to others and I feel confident in saying that he has come up with a functional self defense method that does all of the things that Tai Chi is supposed to do. His system contains a technique that can be taught in 30 seconds that will allow an average sized woman to resist the push of three men against her arm. The system is painless to learn, and gives an amazing amount of exercise to the body without the usual stiffness and soreness. Mike has created several exercises that increase strength, speed, power and sensitivity. His level of development is in many ways better than that of Bruce's during the early sixties. He can punch almost as fast as Bruce, finger jab almost as fast as Bruce, and his circular footwork to the side is better than Bruce's. His personal training has also picked up since the early days. He still does his two hundred bench presses but now he does them with more than three hundred pounds. Mike has designed and built his own special devices for training his body and I have no doubt that he will in some ways catch Bruce.

This doesn't mean that Mike will be able to do the things that Bruce did in the same way, but it does mean that he will be performing at the same level using variations of the things that Bruce did so well. The thing that makes me feel so proud of Mike is that he has taken Bruce's basic principles and worked them into a system that can be taught to the average person in a short period of time with good lasting results. The methods that Mike teaches have their uses in the streets and are not applicable to artificial situations. A new star is rising on the horizon and his name is Mike Lee so look for his arrival.

More to come in the soon to be published Bruce Lee's non-classical Gung Fu.

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