

INSIDE KUNG-FU®

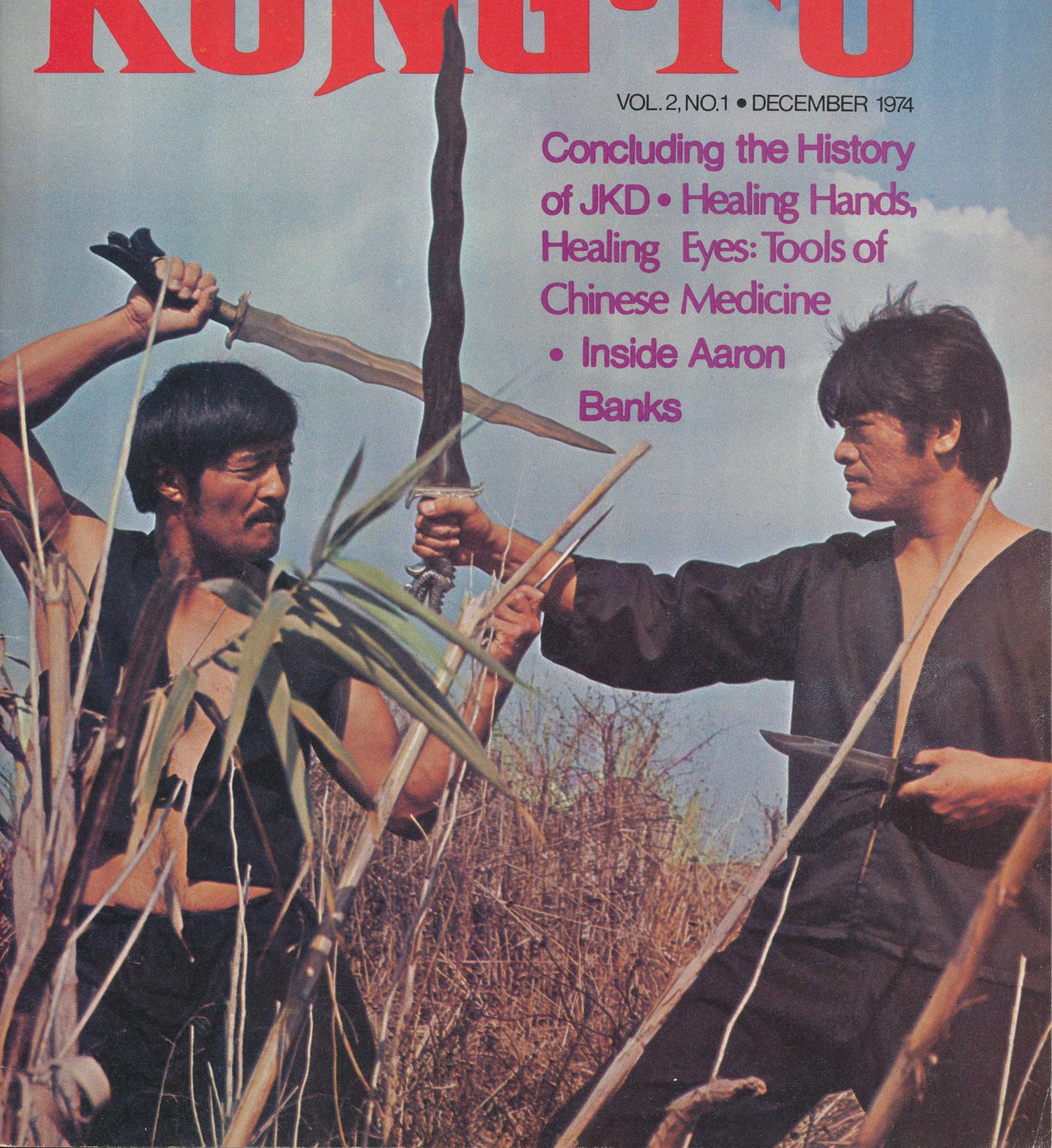
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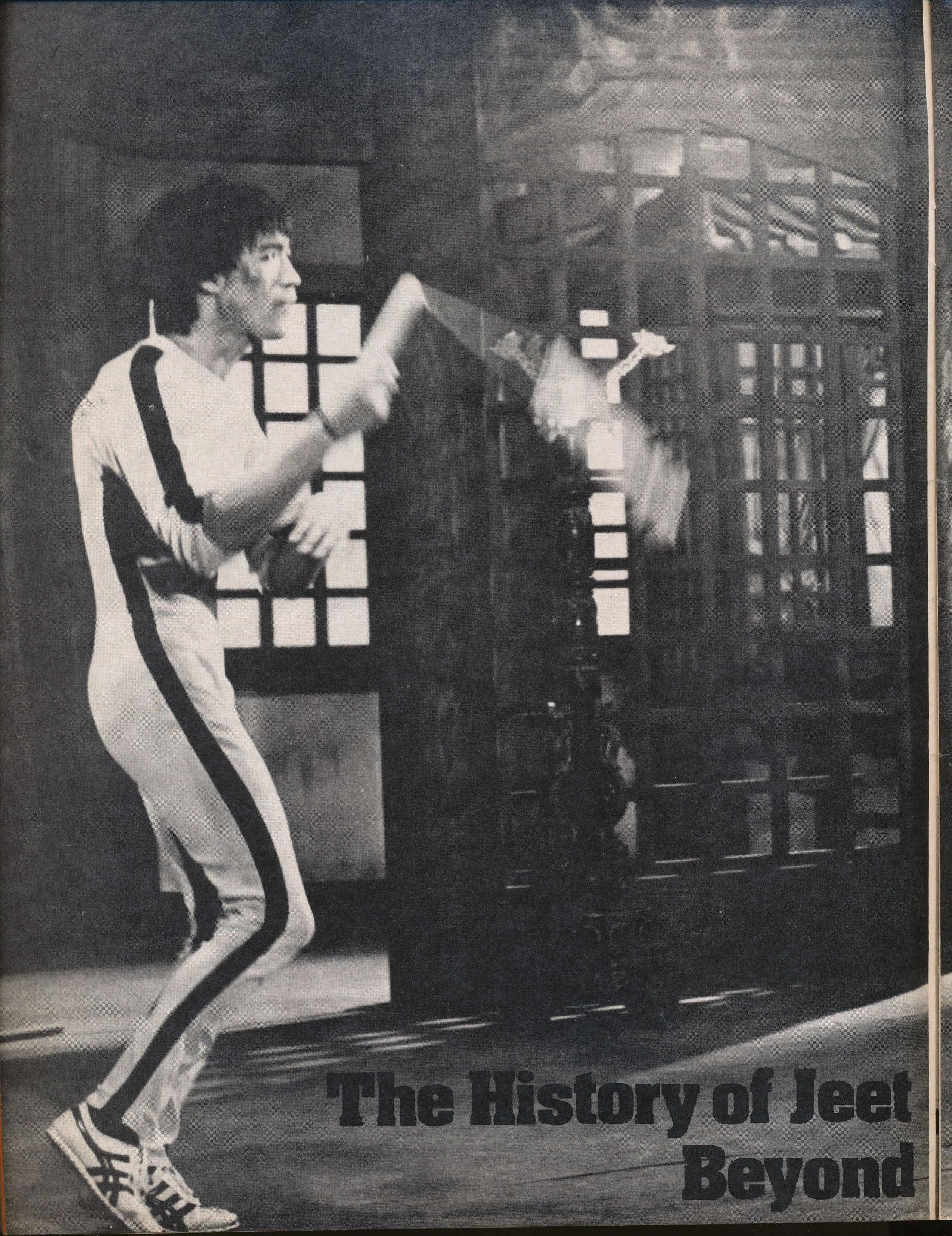
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Concluding the History
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Banks





The History of Jeet Beyond



Kune Do, Part IV: Bruce Lee

by alan sutton

TO A MAN, intimates of the late Bruce Lee state that he was undergoing a spectacular metamorphosis — physical, psychological and, naturally, financial — during the last years of his life. In a little more than a decade, fate had transformed the cocky 18-year-old Chinese American, who grew up in Hong Kong, into an international superstar. As the Seventies came into full swing he was one of the most widely accepted — and worshipped — matinee idols in the world. After the unqualified success of his first two films, *Fists of Fury* and *Chinese Connection*, he formed his own production company with ex-boss, Raymond Chow. Besieged with offers from all sides, his salary per picture had soared from \$10,000 to nearly \$500,000. So genuine and all-pervasive was his appeal, that the omniscient *Playboy* magazine saw fit to include him in their year end cinema review, posthumously, in December of 1973. They called him a “major star,” “indisputably male,” and labeled his Kung-Fu epics “successors to the spaghetti Westerns made famous by (Clint) Eastwood.” Be that as it may, Lee was certainly beginning to feel the full effects of instant stardom when he moved his family to Hong Kong the previous year. Aside from the easily foreseeable invasion of privacy (which, incidently, he had learned to live with ever since the *Green Hornet* days), something else was gnawing at his insides; and it kept him from enjoying the fruits of his labor as much as he might have. According to informed sources, Bruce decried the fact that he didn't know who his friends were in Hong Kong because everyone wanted a favor. He said things were different there. He had nobody he could trust — with the exception of his wife Linda — and it made him very sad.

It seemed that everywhere he turned somebody was asking for a handout, and being the epitome of self-sufficiency, he found such overtures eminently distasteful. It was a sore spot, and not only with Lee. Close friends, too, were distressed because they vividly recalled the “hard times” that characterized much of his married life — for years barely eeking out a living while his family and frustrations continued to multiply. Eventually, he came to accept it, along with the more desirable trappings of success. And insiders agree that he “mellowed” considerably in his thirties.

Physically, Lee would reach one incredible plateau after another, and it was hard to believe for those near him who could see the transition. “The Bruce Lee of '68 was far superior to the Bruce Lee of '67, and so on,” notes his protege, Dan Inosanto. “If you would have asked

me in '69 if he could have improved, I would have probably said ‘No.’ But he just kept getting better, faster and stronger. Then when I saw him in Hong Kong in '72, he had reached a stage where it was almost unbelievable.” Dan Lee, another one of Bruce's senior students, says that this steady development and improvement was an inspiration to his followers. “Through all these years Bruce was a walking example of the value of basic exercise and fitness. This was the most important thing, because we could see him improving and maturing toward ultimate reality.”

Lee's training methods were also in a constant state of flux. According to Inosanto and others, he felt that frequent revisions were a must if one was to keep up with the break-neck pace of an overly mechanized society. Some things stayed the same, yet there was continual modification.

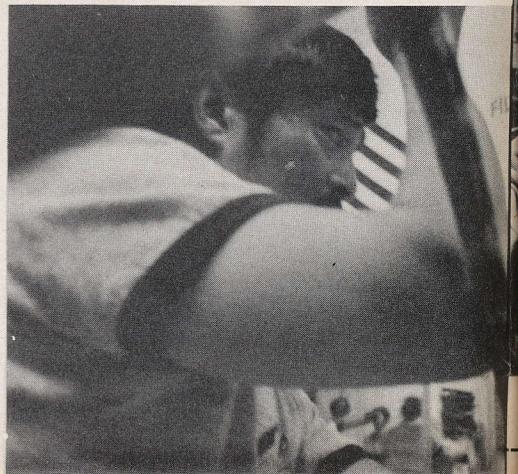
Nowhere was the element of revision more apparent than in his art, Jeet Kune Do. Lee accepted — actually believed in — the inevitability of change, and the evolution of JKD reflects this belief. Beginning in 1966 (although the seeds of change had been planted years before) he started adjusting the stances, footwork and angles of his original style, Wing Chun, realizing that it was too square — too “rigid,” as he said — although he felt that Wing Chun was very good. The resultant art was called Jun Fan Institute (a variation of Lee's Chinese name). The process seems to have run in two-year cycles, for 1968 marked the next improvement when, after much addition and subtraction to his modified Wing Chun system, he came up with Jeet Kune Do — the first non-classical form of Kung-Fu. Then in 1970, while sidelined and semi-invalid as a result of a self-inflicted back injury, he began to intellectualize out of necessity. And when he emerged, as Inosanto puts it, “He beats you with his brain. He doesn't even block anymore, which is remarkable; he controls your distance. You throw a kick, and there's nothing there.”

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The development of Jeet Kune Do didn't cease once Lee became a star. While he was living in the Orient, he showed one of the servants, a cook, how to kick, punch, hold the bag, etc., in order to have someone to train with. He still did his roadwork — religiously — and he would invariably get a strenuous workout on the set, as the inexperience and ineptitude of the Mandarin camera crews often necessitated take after take after take. In addition, having to choreograph the numerous fight scenes stimulated his creative juices, and the inspira-

tion would naturally carry over into things that never found their way onto the silver screen. And then there were the times, when exploring for dramatic effect, he would re-evaluate a certain move or weapon long ago discarded as “ineffectual” and uncover something that could be used in the real world. “As early as '64 at the first *Internationals*, I introduced Bruce to Escrima. At that time he took a pretty dim view of it. Then when I was in Hong Kong, he told me what he liked and what he didn't like about Escrima. I think the emphasis on the empty hands and seeing in the movies that it had a lot of functional value, changed his mind. That's probably why he took more of a liking to it later on,” Inosanto speculates.

As was his custom, Bruce then attempted to enhance the potential of something he considered useful. “What really flabbergasted me,” Inosanto recalls, “was when he grabbed the sticks and said, ‘Okay, now I'll show you what I would do.’ And I looked at it, and with no previous background or training, everything he did was what they call Largo Mano. It's a system in itself. With no previous training whatsoever, he had ad-libbed a style of Escrima that already existed! I said, ‘Hey, that's Largo Mano.’ He said, ‘I don't know what you call it, but this is my method.’”



Although he would be the last to admit it, Lee also practiced meditation. Being a hipster, such “occult” practices just didn’t fit his image, so he always poo-pooed concepts like “internal power,” meditation and *chi*. In the privacy of his own home, however, it was a different story. About three-quarters of the way down his daily list of *Things You Must Do*, he had scribbled in the words: *Mental and Meditation Training*.

Finally, on his frequent trips to the States, Lee never missed an opportunity to combine business with pleasure. In between meetings, conferences and promotional engagements, he without fail made time for Inosanto and one or two other “select” disciples. On such occasions he would usually begin by having them feel his “gut” or some other prominent feature of his extraordinary anatomy, making sure that they took note of his most recent development. Then he would check their progress, commending them on improvements and suggesting areas which still needed work. The sessions would conclude with a few invaluable rounds of free-sparring with the Master.

It was during one such visit that Inosanto saw his mentor, alive, for the last time. Following a near-fatal collapse — due to exhaustion and overwork — while

in the midst of the final sound dub for *Enter the Dragon*, Lee journeyed Stateside for a check-up by a team of American physicians in the early part of 1973. The incident had received much ballyhoo from the “yellow” Hong Kong press, and Lee’s spirits were at their lowest ebb in years. But after a comprehensive battery of tests failed to pinpoint any specific ailment, he once again regained his composure. “The last time I saw him,” Inosanto relates, “was two months before his death. We were taking care of his dog at the time, and he came over to my house. We had lunch together and he said, jokingly, ‘You almost lost your *sifu*. I passed out and my heart stopped.’ He was really jovial about it. Then he showed me how much he had progressed, physically — made me feel his gut — and we worked out a little in the gym in my backyard.”

Lee then returned to Hong Kong to finalize the script for *The Game of Death*, and passed away shortly thereafter — exact cause of death still open to conjecture.

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Regardless of the ultimate disposition of Lee’s controversial autopsy, one thing is for sure. The founder is dead and the future of Jeet Kune Do is now in the hands of his disciples. When he died, he

left behind a tightly knit organization of cooperating individuals and a wealth of written material that, despite his untimely passing, keep the art flourishing and, indeed, expanding in new and exciting directions.

The cornerstone of Lee’s written legacy is the approximately five and a half volume *Tao (Way) of Jeet Kune*. Only one of the volumes has thus far been circulated among his former students. Initially, Inosanto tells us, the *Tao* was meant for his students; but later on, Bruce changed his mind and decided that the complete set should be reserved for his son Brandon. He began working on the project when he was laid up indefinitely after straining his back by over-extending himself during weight training. The exercise was intended to be performed at a 35-40 pound maximum, and he had been doing reps at over 100 pounds when suddenly he felt something give in his back, followed by agonizing pain.

The framework of the *Tao* is strikingly similar to the ancient Chinese classic, *The Art of War*, by Shin Gee. There is no wastage of expression, dialogue is kept to a minimum, everything is concise and to the point. In it he establishes various “truths,” according to principles which he sets up in a challenging, philosophical manner. If Lee had failed as an actor, he certainly could have made it as a writer. “If the *Tao* is ever published — and that would be up to Linda Lee — I think that it will shed some insight on his personality,” Inosanto predicts. “Many people still think of him as a movie star — at least that’s the impression I get from a lot of people. But regardless of what they think of him, he was a philosopher, an artist.”

Another vital source of information concerning the art of Bruce Lee can be extracted from the privileged few who experienced his teaching first hand. Lee was very selective about who he taught, and judging from the reluctance of his disciples to capitalize on their training, his discretion seems to have paid off. Those who have elected to teach certain phases of JKD, do so with little fanfare, screening prospective students with the utmost diligence.

Almost all of Lee’s past students had previous martial arts training before they were introduced to JKD. Similarly, they require that students attain considerable proficiency in a somewhat modified version of their former art as a prerequisite for JKD instruction. All out training in JKD then becomes sort of a “graduate” course — an added bonus for deserving pupils.

All in all, though, literature and spora-

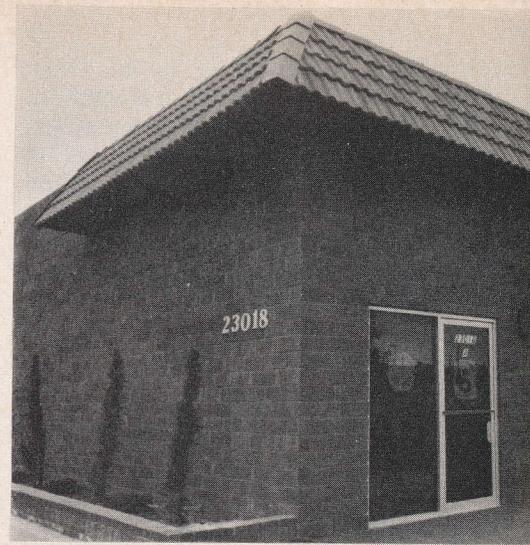


JKD *continued*

dic instruction — no matter how competent — are not enough to insure the continued evolution of Jeet Kune Do.

There is, however, a more all-inclusive influence that has tended to provide the impetus for the further development of JKD in a manner befitting the memory of Bruce Lee. Two of the original four persons Lee authorized to teach his art (himself and close friend James Y. Lee of Oakland, California) have shed their mortal skins and returned to the everlasting

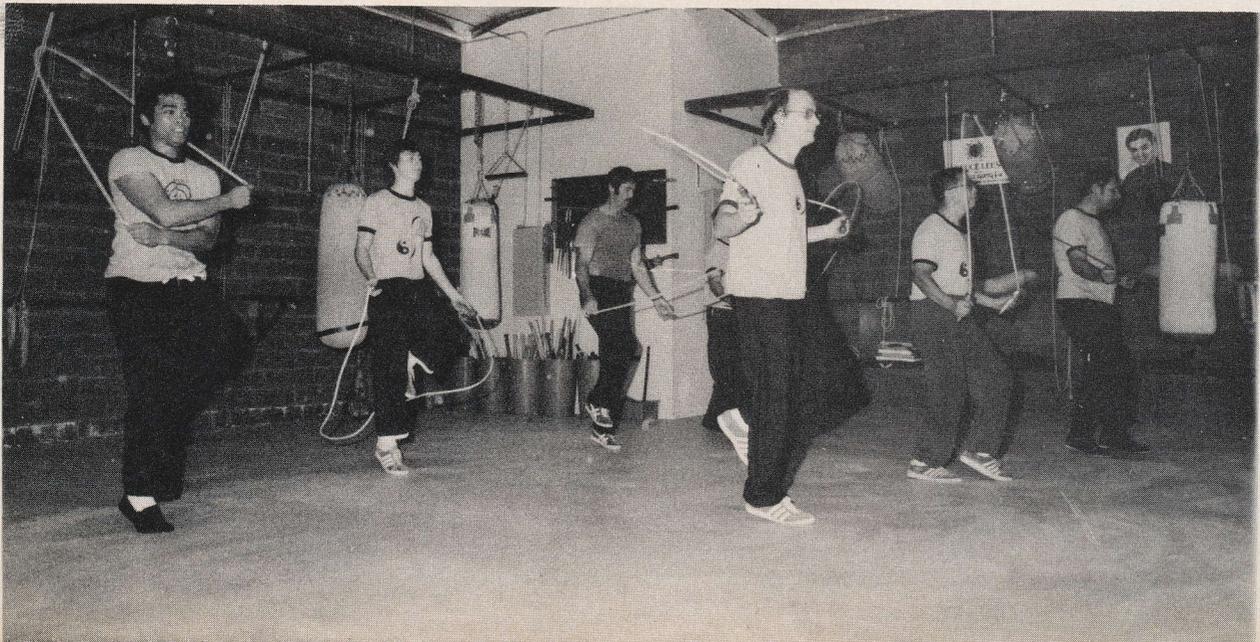
Tao, and now a new breed is moving into the limelight. Some can trace their lineage directly to the founder; others have only read about him or seen him in the movies. Some, like Inosanto, have studied numerous arts for many years, but many have never thrown a side-kick, torqued a punch, been in a streetfight or seen the inside of a *kwoon*. Nearly all are middle class raised, college prep types, versed in the more cerebral aspects of life. They look like they would be at home in an accounting office; they are indistinguishable from the multitude of starry-eyed Bruce Lee fans around the world. But without them, it is doubtful that the Filipino Kali Academy could



Photos: George Foon



(Above) An original College Street threesome—Jerry Poteet, Richard Bustillo and Dan Lee—hone their skills on the top-and-bottom bags at the Filipino Kali Academy.





have survived — let alone doubled in size — during the past nine months.

It is every serious martial artist's dream to one day have his own school. Dan Inosanto and Richard Bustillo were no exceptions. Both had studied under Lee for a considerable length of time, and they were working men, too, and looking for a way out of the drudgery inherent in the all familiar get-up-go-to-work-come-home-watch-television-then-go-to-sleep routine which threatens to turn America into a nation of vidiots. They longed to see JKD continue to flourish, yet didn't want to see it perpetuated in any way that would demean the spirit and teachings of their beloved *sifu*. Then nearly a year

neral course — sort of a modified form of Wing Chun. And then they progress. The last stage is the Kali stage — the Filipino art — and Jeet Kune Do. We put them together because they compliment each other so well. And we feel that these are the two highest stages in our art.

"Beginning students are told that they are not learning Jeet Kune Do; we don't advertise as Jeet Kune Do. And they aren't learning Jeet Kune Do until they reach a certain stage. We do that both with the Filipino art of Kali and Jeet Kune Do. In many ways, I even feel more possessive about the Kali. I like both arts; I consider them two halves of one whole. They compliment each other, and to us, the Kali has opened our eyes in JKD and vice versa."

In the main, a name is just a name, a means of identification; names tell nothing about the relative efficacy of a particular martial art. The curriculum at the Academy can be described as Jeet Kune Do or Filipino Escrima — it makes no difference because, as Inosanto reveals, "Bruce hated to name his arts." In any event, the Filipino arts are a natural vehicle for the maturation of JKD.

Bustillo points out some of the similarities between the Filipino arts and Lee's revolutionary style of Kung-Fu. "They both use the lead hand, lead foot. In Jeet Kune Do the front hand is dominant over the rear hand. Whether it is the left or right, it is the *live* hand, the parrying hand or the sliding hand. In Escrima, it's the same way. In JKD you would say 'trapping'; in Escrima you say 'checking.' " In addition, there are probably just as many different styles and systems of Escrima as there are Kung-Fu. It is not merely a "stick art" as many believe. Escrima encompasses the entire spectrum of weaponry and is a most devastating empty-handed art to boot. So devastating, in fact, that the .45 had to be invented during the Spanish American War, because the .38 proved worthless against the Moros of the Southern Philippines whom the Americans were attempting to colonize (in the name of Manifest Destiny) after having been granted the islands as reparation from Spain.

Mirroring the Chinese art of Kung-Fu, the martial arts of the Philippines are irrevocably intertwined with all aspects of the culture at large. In every sense of the words, they were regarded as religious and philosophical. An Escrimador had the ability to heal — not unlike the peripatetic monks who traveled throughout early China, spreading the art of Kung-Fu. They were treated with awe and deference by the common people, and were believed to have possessed "magical"



after he was gone, they decided that, misgivings aside, they were the most qualified of anyone to publicly teach his art. They also decided not to call their retreat The Bruce Lee Memorial School of Kung-Fu or The Jeet Kune Do Institute of Self-Defense or to refer to it by some other such exhibitionist moniker; but instead, to seize the opportunity and kill two birds with one stone. Thus, the Filipino Kali Academy was born out of a desire to promote their cultural arts while at the same time providing a rallying point for those who sincerely wished to continue in Lee's footsteps.

"What we teach at the Filipino Kali Academy," states Inosanto, "is a combination of four things: Escrima, Arnis, Kali and Sikaran. We put them all together, and most classes start off with a ge-



powers. They practiced meditation and also cultivated a highly sophisticated internal system. Lastly, some aspects of the Filipino tradition — as with the Chinese — can be traced all the way back to ancient Indian sources. For example, the Filipino word for instructor, *Guro*, is strikingly similar to the Indian term, *Guru*.

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Bruce Lee was Jeet Kune Do. The art was inseparable from the man. It was his religion, his philosophy, his ode to immortality. It was his life and it was his wife. It permeated every cell of his being, every corner of his soul. Ironically, it may well have been his demise.

"If you had to name one shortcoming of Bruce Lee, I'd say that it was lack of patience — with himself and with other people," Inosanto recounts with a sigh. "To cite an example, one time he was on the set and the stick he was using kept slipping out of his hand because it's so humid there (Hong Kong). He got angry and threw two of them away. He'd get really upset if he couldn't get something right away; he was a perfectionist." What Inosanto neglects to add, however, are reports that Lee severed the sweat glands under his arms in order to alleviate the problem — a drastic remedy to say the least. But that was Bruce — forever impatient with himself and the world around him. "One time he told me that he couldn't stand anybody that was slow moving, slow thinking. If there was a flaw or shortcoming — whatever you want to call it — that was it: he had a really short fuse."

Lee came to the end of his fuse on July 20, 1973, at the age of 32. At that very moment, he was on the verge of becoming the biggest box-office attraction in the world. The picture he was working on at the time, *The Game of Death*, would have surely catapulted him ahead of such established and unfailingly consistent theater-packers as Charles Bronson, Robert Redford, Burt Reynolds and, yes, Linda Lovelace — in spite of its "G" rating. Briefly, a hypothetical country's national treasure is purloined, threatening economic collapse. The culprits have stashed the treasure safely away in the top floor of a towering pagoda, located on a mysterious island, ringed with metal detectors. Lee is summoned, and along with a small handful of allies, sets out for the island. Upon arriving, he discovers that in order to retrieve the trea-

sure he and his companions must fight their way to the top of the pagoda, floor by floor — each guarded by a progressively more powerful adversary. On the first floor, manned by a sizable contingent of Karatemens, they encounter little difficulty. The second floor is a different story. Lee loses most of his men before destroying three Kung-Fu masters. The rest of Lee's men fall victim to the Escrima Wizard (played by Dan Inosanto) on the next floor, leaving him to face the final and most deadly foe (played by basketball star Kareem Abdul Jabbar) in the Temple of the Unknown. Tragically, the grim reaper called Lee's number before the film was half completed.

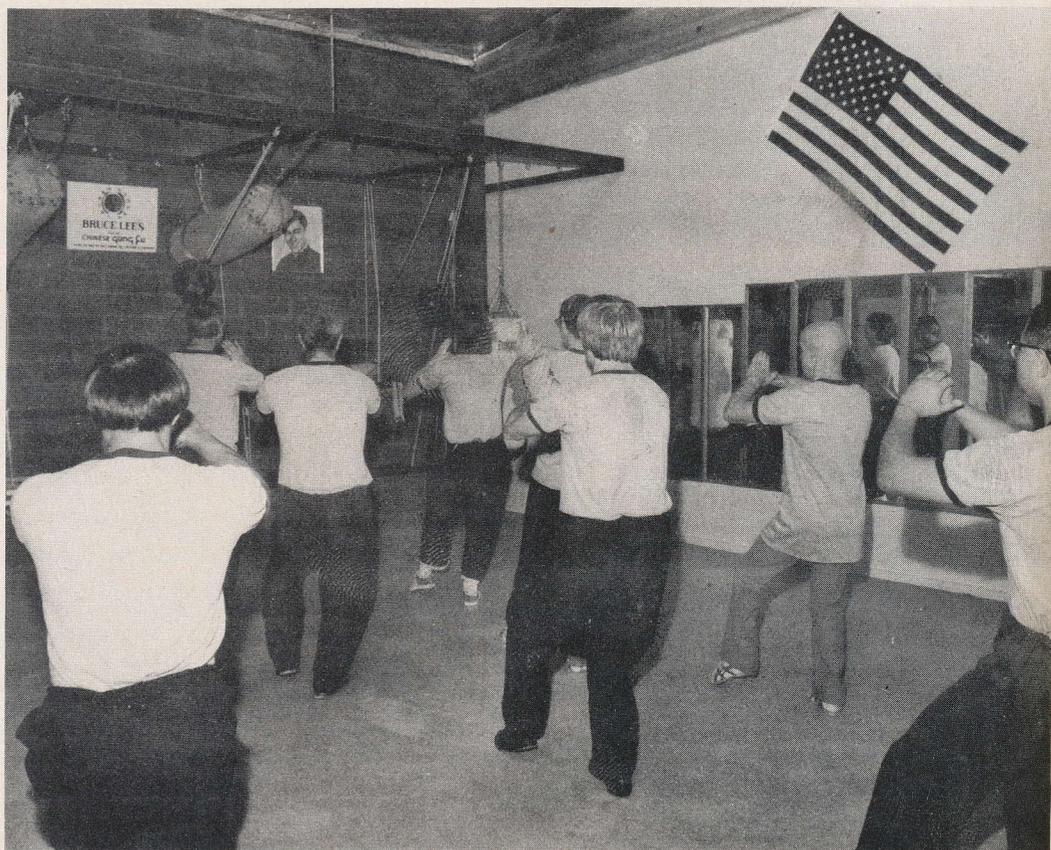
Yet, Bruce Lee lives. "It's my feeling that Bruce Lee will become a James Dean figure of the Seventies," wrote folksinger Phil Ochs in the music magazine *Zoo World*.

True, Lee was a savior in the eyes of millions of hero-starved individuals the world over who could no longer blindly place their faith in traditional demagogues—generals, politicians, sports figures—when faced with the startling revelations of the Watergate era. However, Inosanto opines, he should most be remembered for the legacy he bequeathed to

martial artists everywhere, because he always thought of himself *first* as one of them. "His message is to question, to seek the truth not in terms of what is the accepted standard. Never be afraid to question; never be afraid to be creative; never be afraid to do your own thing, what you think is correct. Bruce used to say, 'Life is combat.' That's why everything we learned could be applied elsewhere.

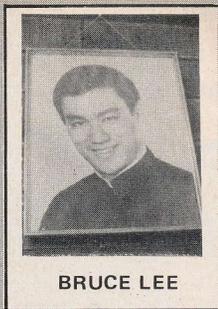
"When Bruce died, I didn't know which way to go. But I feel that this is the best way — to have some kind of a line. Funny, but he said, 'When I die, these guys will probably do something that I won't like. They'll probably build monuments, have impressive creeds, hang pictures of me in the halls and bow to me.' So I often think about that as I go through our salutation where the last thing we do is salute Bruce's picture. But to me it's an honor, a sign of respect. To me it's important that there be a line, so that's what I'm working on now. I'm going to make sure that, if I go, there's always somebody. That is why we opened."

This is the fourth and last in a series of articles on Dan Inosanto and his spiritual guide, Bruce Lee.



A JKD FAMILY TREE:

(November, 1974)



BRUCE LEE

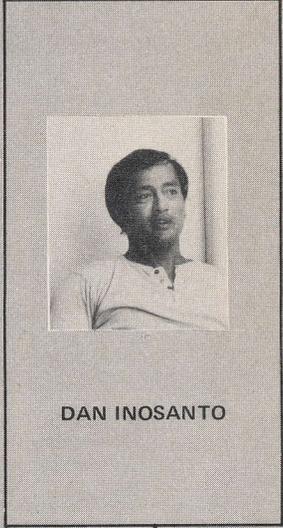
MY FOLLOWERS IN JEET KUNE DO DO LISTEN TO THIS ALL FIXED SET PATTERN ARE INCAPABLE OF ADAPTABILITY OR FLEXIBILITY. THE TRUTH IS OUTSIDE OF ALL FIXED PATTERNS.
Bruce Lee

MAN THE LIVING CREATURE. THE CREATING INDIVIDUAL IS ALWAYS MORE IMPORTANT THAN ANY ESTABLISHED STYLE OR SYSTEM.
Bruce Lee

THE TRUTH IN COMBAT IS DIFFERENT FOR EACH INDIVIDUAL IN THIS STYLE.
1. RESEARCH YOUR OWN EXPERIENCE
2. ASSURE WHAT IS USEFUL
3. REFLECT WHAT IS USELESS
4. ADD WHAT IS SPECIFICALLY YOUR OWN

TAKY KIMURA is the "senior student" of Jeet Kune Do, Inosanto tells us. He was one of Bruce Lee's earliest friends and admirers when the unabashed 18-year-old first returned to America (Lee was born in San Francisco and left for Hong Kong when he was six months old) from Hong Kong. Kimura was originally a Judo man, who was converted over to Jun Fan Institute shortly after meeting Bruce in Seattle, Washington. Currently, he teaches a few "priveleged" students at Bruce's original school in Seattle.

JAMES Y. LEE had studied Sil Lum Kung-Fu for more than five years before meeting Bruce Lee (no relation) in Oakland, California in the early Sixties. The two quickly became the best of friends. When Bruce decided to open up a school in the Bay area, he put James in charge and, in fact, named the school The James Lee. It was James who prodded Bruce into writing his first book, Chinese Gung-Fu the Philosophical Art of Self-Defense. James died of cancer just six months prior to Bruce's untimely passing.



DAN INOSANTO

TED WONG was one of the few non-martial artists to experience Bruce Lee's teaching directly. With no previous training, he began at the Chinatown school in 1967. "One day Bruce saw him working out and said, 'I'll take him for a private student,'" reveals Inosanto. Ted quickly became one of Bruce's closest friends. He now teaches a few private students, workouts at the Filipino Kali Academy every other week or so and has taught Bruce's brother, Robert, and son, Brandon.

DAN LEE is good-naturedly referred to as the "old man" of JKD. Although in his forties, he still mixes it up with students twenty years his junior and usually comes out on top. A former boxer and student of Kenpo Karate, Dan was the first student admitted to the College Street school, run by Inosanto, in Los Angeles' Chinatown. He presently teaches T'ai-chi Ch'uan, in addition to JKD, and helps out with the teaching chores at the Filipino Kali Academy whenever his busy schedule permits.

JERRY POTEET is a former Kenpo man, original College Street student and a member of the prestigious "Saturday Bunch," who trained at Bruce's home once a week during the Sixties in addition to their regular sessions in Chinatown. Today Jerry serves as an assistant instructor at the Filipino Kali Academy. The silver-goteeded Poteet, 38, is a favorite at the Academy and lives with his wife and children in Temple City, California.

RICHARD BUSTILLO is Inosanto's partner in the Filipino Kali Academy. He is a former Kajukenbo man and boxer from Hawaii who first began his JKD training with the original Chinatown group and with Bruce's chosen few on Wednesday nights. Like Inosanto, Richard is primarily concerned with promoting his cultural arts - Escrima, Arnis, Sikaran and Kali - in addition to maintaining the quality of JKD instruction. The personable Bustillo, 32, presently makes his home in Gardena, California.

LARRY HARTSELL teaches JKD to a small group of carefully screened students out of a friend's Kung-Fu school located in Charlotte, North Carolina. He first met Bruce Lee prior to the latter's opening his College Street school in 1967, began training then, and continued under Inosanto at number 628. Before that, he had been Inosanto's Kenpo student when Dan was teaching for Ed Parker. Hartsell, a towering individual, is regarded as one of the premier JKD "fighters."

BOB BREMER, age 45, is a former Kenpo Karate student with a working knowledge of JKD. He began his studies under Inosanto at the College Street school and is presently in semi-retirement as far as teaching is concerned. Bremer lives in Alhambra, where he prefers to teach a few close friends in the privacy of his home.

PETE JACOBS of San Gabriel, California is another former Kenpo man who made the switch to JKD once the Chinatown school opened in Los Angeles. Today Jacobs is loath to advertise the fact that he teaches some JKD (in addition to Escrima and Arnis) to a small group of about a dozen in his backyard.

TIM TACKETT is one of the most knowledgeable JKD practitioners, according to Inosanto. He has studied Hsing-I Kung-Fu and various other styles in Taiwan. He also received Escrima and Arnis training from Inosanto, and began in JKD when Dan opened up his backyard to a few individuals following the close of the College Street school in 1969. Tim now has his own school in Redlands, California, where he teaches Escrima and JKD to some of his better students.

TONY LUNA began his martial arts training in Shotokan and Kenpo Karate before signing up at the Chinatown school in 1968. As is the case with most former Bruce Lee students, Luna prefers not to advertise and teaches only a handful of individuals, privately. He recently passed his bar exam and makes his home in East Los Angeles, California.

STEVE GOLDEN is a Karate Black Belt with supplemental training in JKD. He is currently authorized to teach the JKD method to a handful of students out of his backyard in Eugene, Oregon.

ALSO AUTHORIZED TO TEACH JKD:
DR. BOB WARD of Fullerton, California.
SEPH LAMOG and **RICHARD LEE** both of Redwood, California.

