

LIVING

How the Jeet Kune Do Nucleus Is Preserving

Life is all about control. The brain controls the body. The nerve controls the muscle. The nucleus controls the cell. Without control, no organism can function efficiently or effectively.

The martial arts world is composed of hundreds of styles—in essence, cells that make up the whole of the organism. Within each cell there needs to be an entity that governs the propagation and teaching of that art. Within the cell that is called *jeet kune do*, the governing body is the Jeet Kune Do Nucleus.

Black Belt recently caught up with several members of the Nucleus at a seminar held at Richard Bustillo's International Martial Arts and Boxing Academy in Torrance, California. They provided the following update on the status of the organization and the art.

Role of the Nucleus

On January 10, 1996 Lee's widow, Linda Lee Cadwell; his daughter, Shannon Lee Keasler; and several first- and second-generation students gathered to discuss the state of JKD. They founded an organization called Jun Fan Jeet

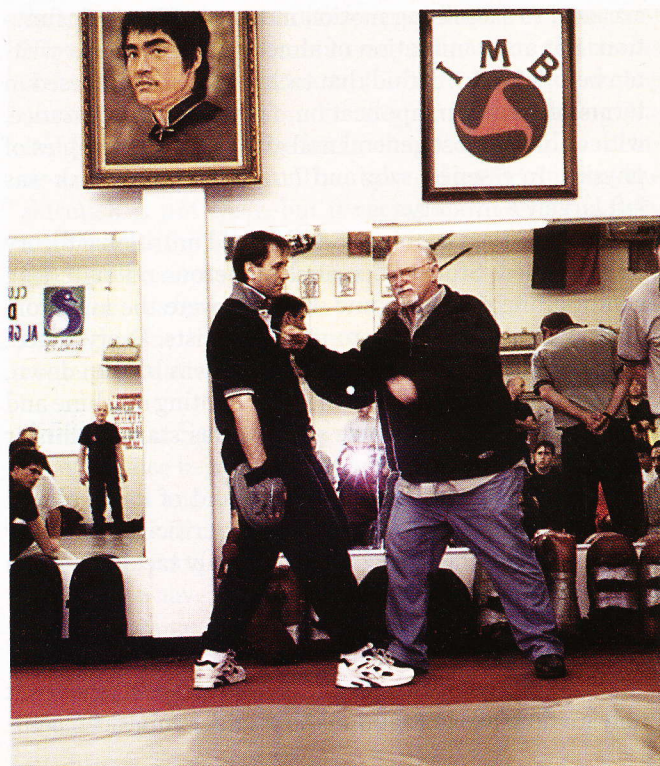
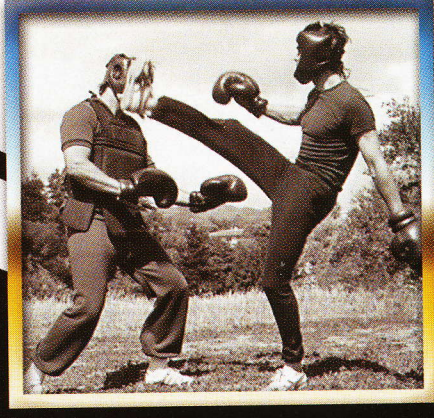
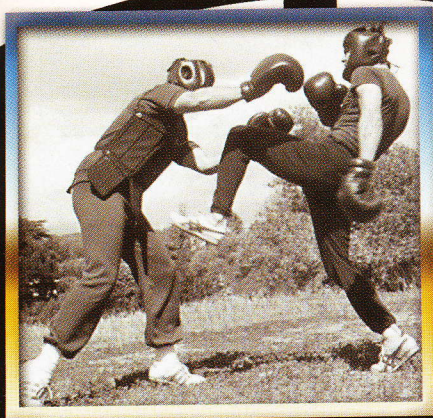


PHOTO BY SARA FOGAN

With help from Cass Magda, Bob Bremer (right) teaches the two-inch penetration punch of jeet kune do.



LEGACY

Preserving Bruce Lee's Teachings by Sara Fogan

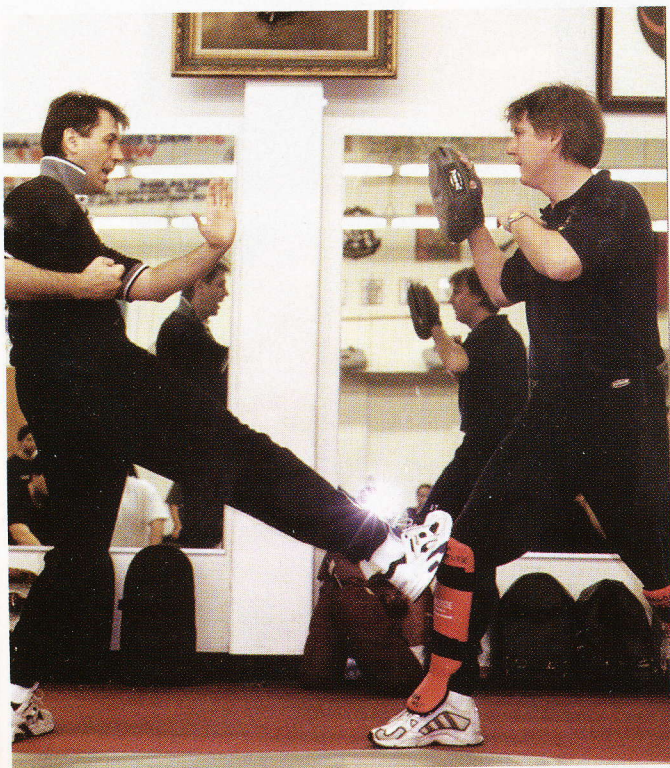


PHOTO BY SARA FOGAN

Cass Magda (left) and Chris Kent demonstrate the effectiveness of a jeet kune do low kick.

Kune Do, which was dedicated to preserving and maintaining the martial art that Lee practiced and taught until his death in 1973. As more people became interested in learning those techniques and principles, the members changed the organization's name to the Bruce Lee Educational Foundation in 1999 because it better described their mission to educate the public about his life and work. The founding members of Jun Fan Jeet Kune Do would form the JKD Nucleus to control the dissemination of information to Foundation members.

"We formed this non-profit organization to educate people about what Bruce was actually doing during his lifetime," says Cadwell. Now, practitioners come from all over the world to train with the board members of the Foundation and former students who have passed on Lee's teachings for the past 30 years, she adds.

More than 1,000 people have already joined the Foundation, Bustillo says. In addition to their personal training, an important part of their JKD education takes place at an annual convention hosted by Nucleus members. If they cannot attend that event, a series of regional semi-

Educating the Public About Bruce

Bruce Lee is not just a martial arts legend; he is a cultural icon. Recognizing the incredible gifts he gave to the martial arts community during his lifetime, the Nucleus members of the Bruce Lee Educational Foundation have dedicated themselves to the following:

- The establishment and operation of the Bruce Lee Center in Seattle to house and preserve Lee's scripts, memorabilia from his movies and TV series, exercise equipment and other personal effects.
- The holding of regional seminars several times a year and an annual convention each spring for *jeet kune do* students to discuss Lee and study his techniques.
- The protection of the authentic teachings of Lee's art for the benefit of future generations. —Sara Fogan

nars gives them a chance to study the art in a more intimate environment, Cadwell says. "It's a valuable opportunity for students to get some knowledge directly from people who studied with Bruce."

The Foundation also produces written materials, cassettes and videotapes about Lee and his philosophical, technical and scientific principles. And it oversees the operation of the Bruce Lee Center in Seattle, where many of

The Bruce Lee Educational Foundation organizes an annual convention and regional seminars to spread jeet kune do as it was originally taught.

PHOTOS BY SARA FOGAN



International Camaraderie

The Bruce Lee Educational Foundation provides private and group instruction and hosts regional seminars during the year. It also holds an annual international convention to give students an opportunity to get together, discuss Lee's life and work, and study his art with his original students.

The 5th Annual Jun Fan Jeet Kune Do Seminar will be held at Congrescentrum Noordwijkerhout in the Netherlands on April 28-29, 2001. For more information, call (559) 298-5553 or visit <http://www.bruceleefoundation.com>.

—Sara Fogan



Richard Bustillo recently hosted a regional Jeet Kune Do Nucleus seminar at his International Martial Arts and Boxing Academy in Torrance, California.

Lee's personal effects are on display for his devotees and the public to see.

An Evolving Art

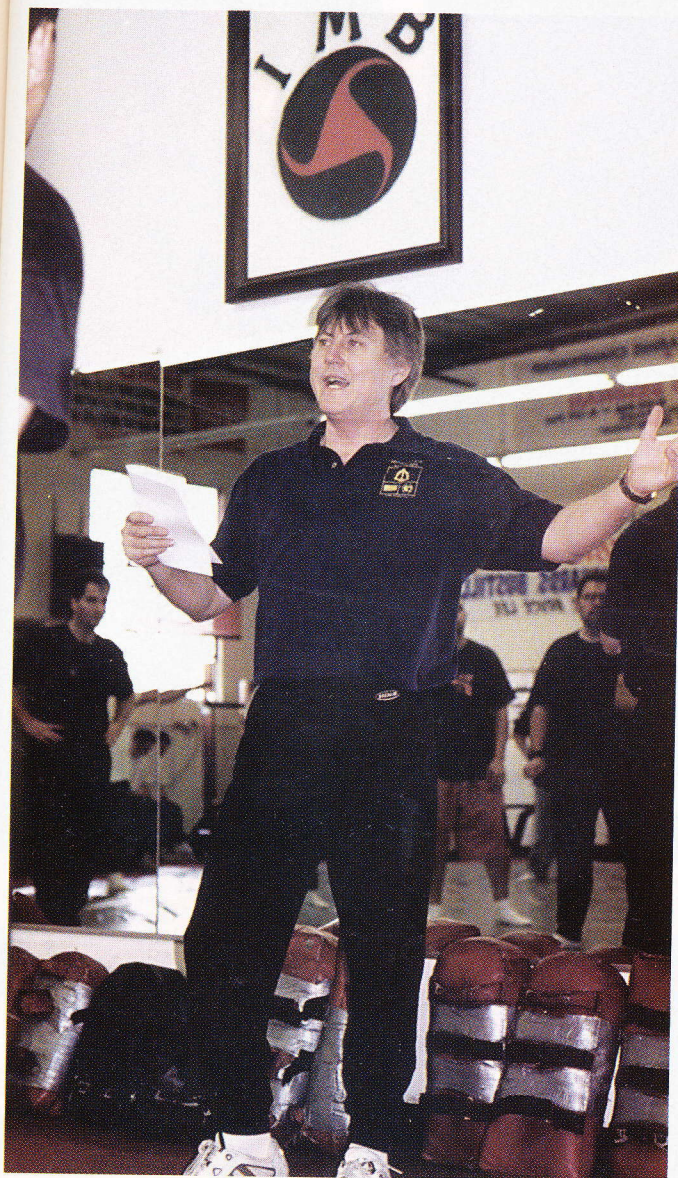
The Foundation's principal aim—to preserve JKD as Lee practiced it—is not always an easy task. Because so many martial artists have latched onto the art, it is often taught in a way that contradicts Lee's own beliefs, Bustillo says.

To rectify that, Nucleus members call their strictly interpreted version of the art *jun fan jeet kune do*. "Jeet kune do was Bruce Lee's personal art, and Jun Fan was his birth name," Bustillo says. Combining the two terms helps distinguish what Lee practiced from what modern JKD practitioners teach, he adds.

Lee taught people to keep an open mind and not limit themselves by studying a single style of combat, Bustillo continues. Keeping an open mind means that JKD is in a constant state of flux. Even some of Lee's original students who are now part of the Nucleus say they learned techniques a little differently than their peers, says Tim Tackett, a second-generation student who started his JKD

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Second-generation student Chris Kent addresses the seminar participants at the International Martial Arts and Boxing Academy.



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training under Dan Inosanto, one of Lee's original followers.

Herb Jackson and Ted Wong, both first-generation students, know this firsthand. Jackson recalls how he and Wong trained with Lee at his house hundreds of times but no two training sessions were ever the same.

"All of Bruce's instruction was toward the individual expression and response to whatever is at that particular time," Jackson says. "The idea is to be able to adapt yourself to any situation that might arise." Obviously, this sort of freedom of expression ruled out his students' having to follow particular forms, he adds.

"Somebody who was studying with Lee in 1967 punched differently from somebody who was studying with him in 1970," Tackett says.

Jackson overcomes that obstacle by teaching students how to teach themselves the techniques that work best for them. "I think that was one of the theories behind Bruce's skills: Fire other people up to be able to express themselves," he says.

According to JKD philosophy, part of expressing oneself is also being adept at using "soft" defensive skills, or *yin* energy, to defeat an opponent, says Daniel Lee, Bruce's first student at the Chinatown school in Los Angeles. Now a *tai chi* master, Daniel Lee has taught the soft side of the art for 33 years.

Although hundreds of martial arts instructors around the world have adopted the name "jeet kune do" to describe the methods they teach, many of them have diverged from Bruce Lee's philosophies. The goal of the JKD Nucleus, its members say, is to return to those original teachings.

PHOTO BY SARA FOGAN



Members of the Nucleus

Bob Bremer
Richard Bustillo
Linda Lee Cadwell
Steve Golden
Tommy Gong
Herb Jackson
Pete Jacobs
Allen Joe
Shannon Lee Keasler
Chris Kent
Andy Kimura
Taky Kimura
Daniel Lee
George Lee
John Little
Cass Magda
Jerry Poteet
Tim Tackett
Ted Wong

"Blocks and strikes are hard; they're speed- and power-generating techniques," Daniel Lee says. "I try to show people how to use their experience and skill to counter an attack using the other person's energy against him. By nature people tense up, but if they can do combat training with a relaxed and pliable body, a lot of wonderful things happen."

Preserving the Art

JKD continues to evolve today—just as it did during Lee's lifetime. Although the Foundation is not about trying to stop the growth and evolution of JKD, Nucleus members are determined to not lose Lee's original teachings in the process. "JKD is kind of a generic term that allows people to do whatever they want with it—add things, take things away or whatever," says Steven Golden, a first-generation student.

Golden advises other Nucleus members about which techniques should be part of the curriculum. If a particular technique is deemed not to be compliant with the Nucleus' standards, it does not become part of *jun fan jeet kune do*, he says.

"We try to keep what Bruce Lee had taught—philosophies, concepts, principles, theories and training methods—up to the time he passed away," Bustillo says. "Anything after that is our own individual program." ✕

About the author: Sara Fogan is the managing editor of Black Belt.