

The R & D of JKD

**Jeet kune do is being alive,
aware, sensing your
environment, improving,
always looking for a better
way, then a counter for that
way, then a counter for that
counter.**

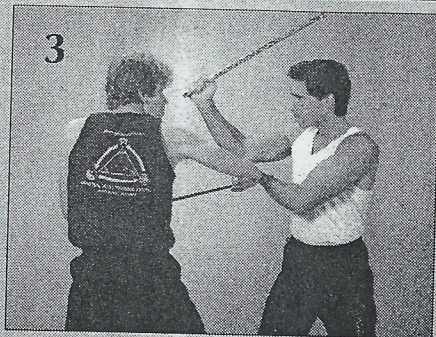
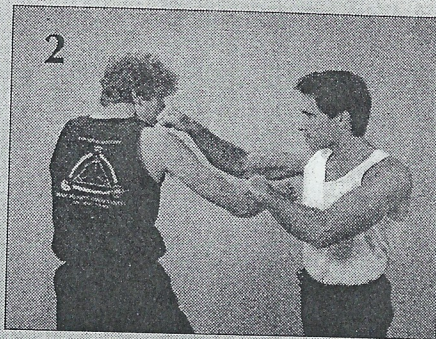
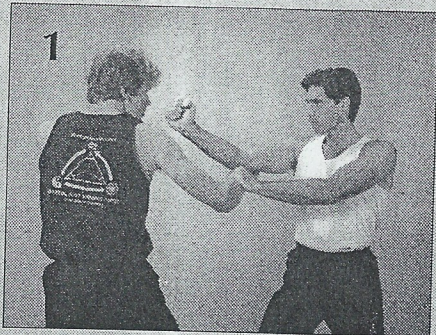
By Burton Richardson

People are still attracted to the art the legendary Bruce Lee named jeet kune do; the way of the intercepting fist. The only problem is that every JKD instructor seems to teach something totally different. One guy teaches what he claims to be the authentic, original, undiluted art that Bruce gave to his students. Another teaches along a different line, but also claims that it is the authentic, original, undiluted art. Who is right? Who is teaching the real stuff? Probably neither and both.

Here we go talking in riddles, but we should be striving for the truth and this is it. Bruce Lee taught a lot of students at different times in his development. What is authentic for one student would not be the same for the next. Another truth is that it is nearly impossible to teach something in the exact same way as your teacher and we should recognize that the art shouldn't be taught merely for the purpose of preserving it.

The key to understanding and becoming a worthy practitioner of the art is experience. You must experience how to kick, punch, and so on. You must know what it is like to be on the ground in a grappling situation with someone who is bigger, stronger, or better. If you want to understand stick-fighting you must know how it feels to have your flesh smashed with a stick that is traveling over 100 miles per





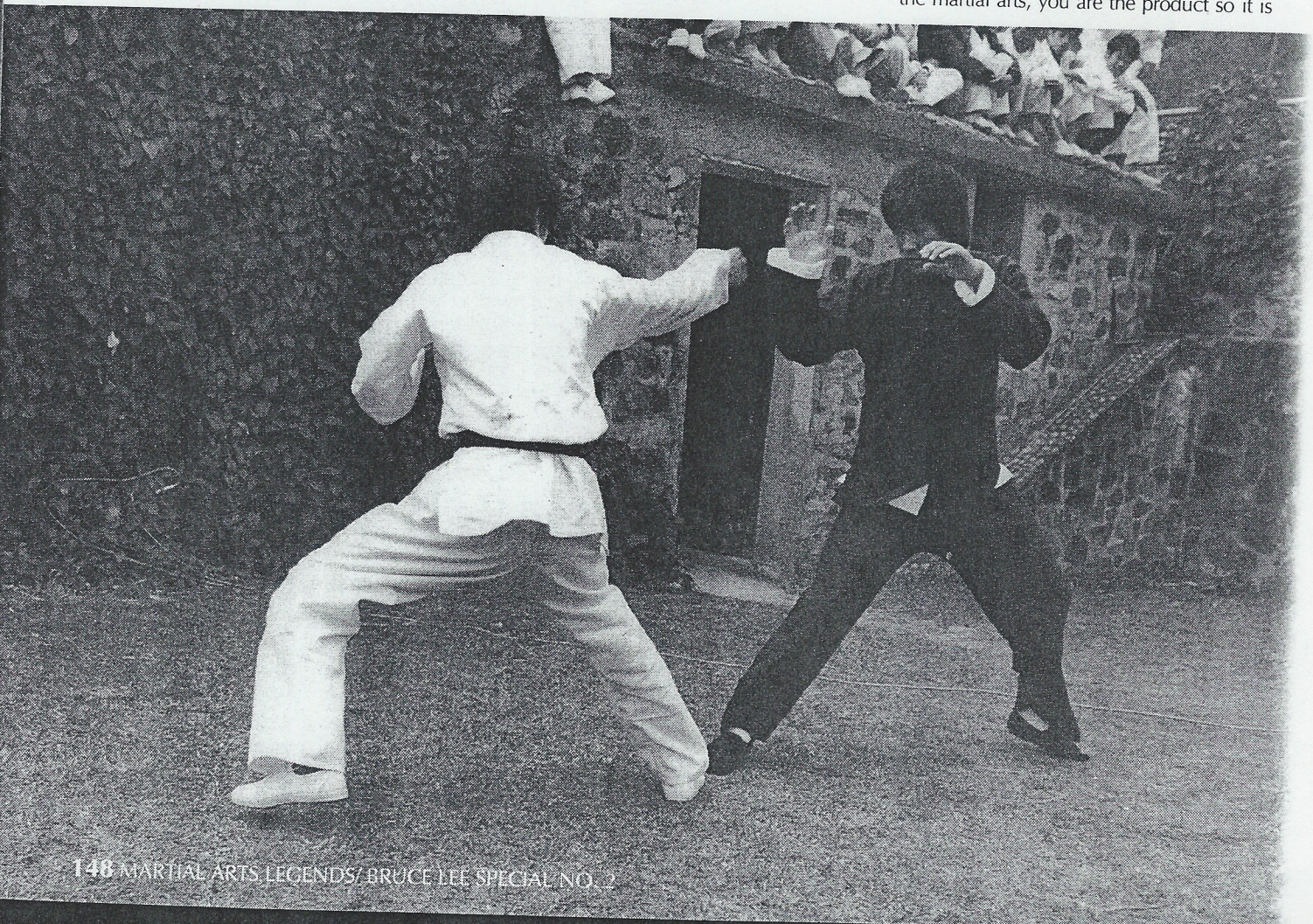
Similar entries from (1) Jun Fan Gung Fu; (2) Pentjak Silat Bukti Negara; (3) Kali.

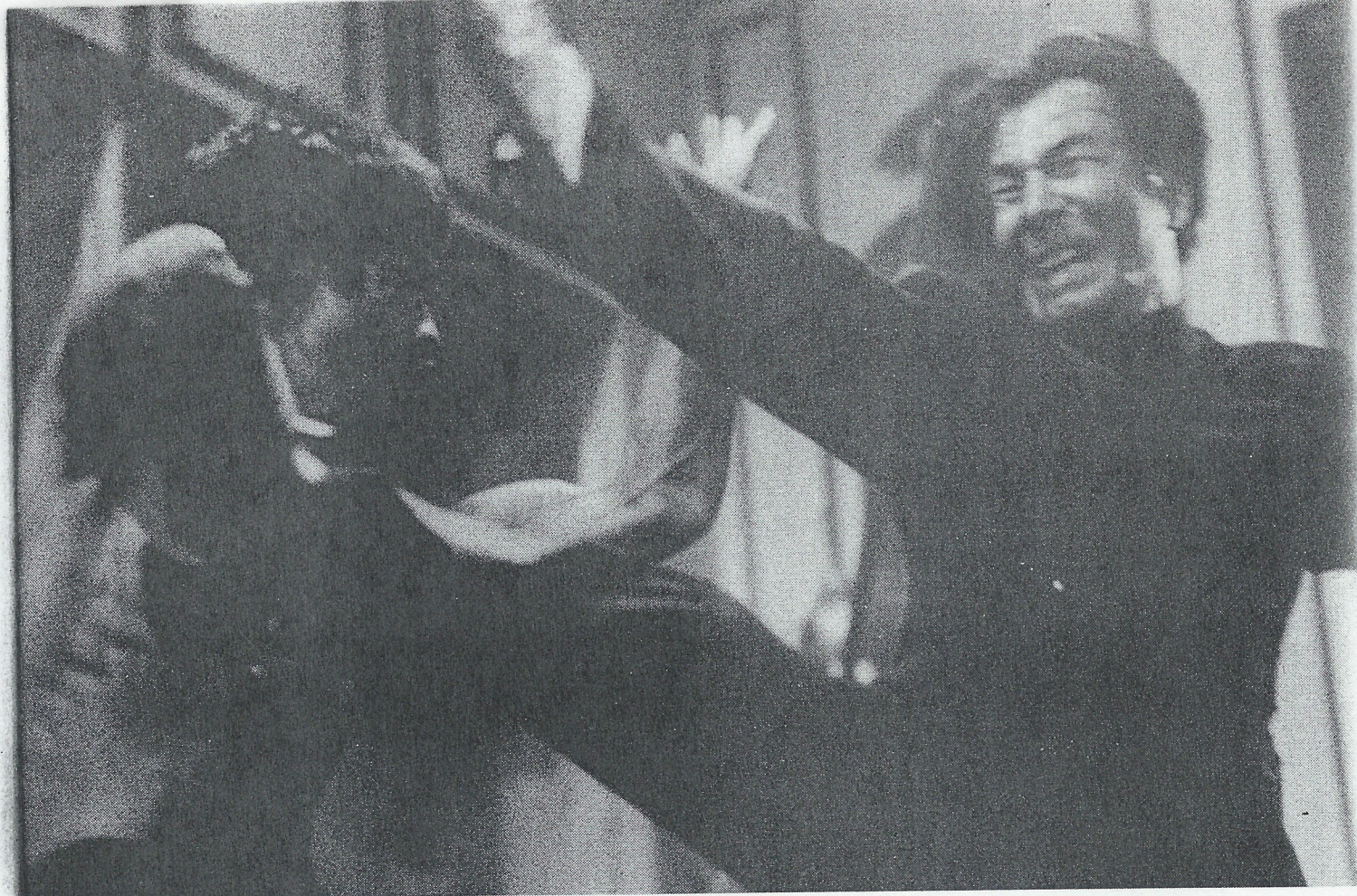
hour. You must experience how things change without warning.

This is JKD

Being alive, aware, sensing your environment, improving, always looking for a better way, then a counter for that way then a counter for that counter. You are JKD. Better yet, forget the name and realize simply that you are the art. It is your responsibility to learn from your teachers, digest the information, and add to or subtract from what you have. This is what sifu Dan Inosanto, Bruce Lee's training partner, likes to call research and development. "R & D" is what keeps a billion-dollar industry alive and it may be the key to keeping your training alive and growing in the years to come.

Business and fighting are similar. No wonder so many businessmen read Japan's legendary "sword saint" Miyamoto Musashi's, *Book of Five Rings*, to prepare for the duels of the corporate world. In business you have a product or a service which you trade for a customer's service which is often represented in the form of money. You also have competitors vying for the same customers. The best way to secure that client is by providing a better value than the competition. This means having a superior product for a comparable price. In the martial arts, you are the product so it is



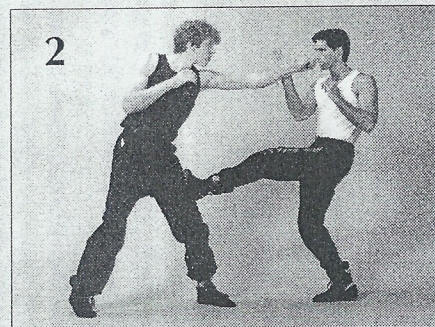


up to you to improve yourself to meet the highest standards.

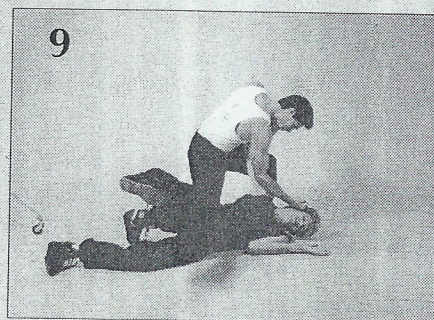
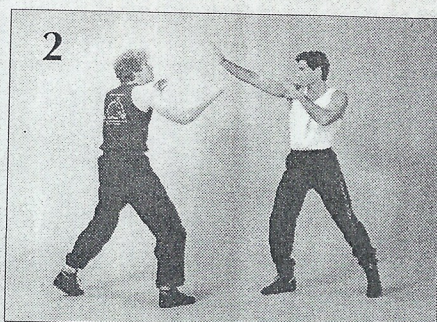
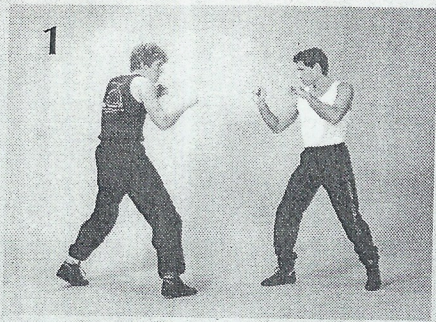
In business, the company will spend plenty of time and money researching the latest technologies to incorporate into the merchandise. First research then development of a newer, better product. You should do the same in the quest for improved understanding and performance in the martial arts. This is where the idea of "using no way as way and having no limitation as limitation" comes into play.

There are limitations

Realize that any style or system you adhere to is going to be limited, not because the style is lousy, but because there are just too many possibilities in the realm of martial arts. Every style was born out of its environment. The founder of the system put it together to function efficiently in the prevalent conditions. Variables may include the type of armor the enemy wore, the types of weapons used, the typical attacks used, or the physical environment that the battle in which was most likely to take place. Systems from a dry, dusty region are going to be different from those created in a rainy, muddy area. People living in icy climates have to take thick clothing into account when they devise fighting strategies.



Similar kicking methods from (1) Boxe-Francaise Savate; (2) Jun Fan Gung Fu; (3) Kali.



In our age of instant communications, we have access to so many styles of fighting that we must pick those that best suit our needs. Research the different arts, then develop yourself through consistent practice and the relentless pursuit of excellence. Here are a few things you should look for as you conduct your research.

Don't be surprised when you see a practitioner from another style doing one of your "secret" moves. People aren't surprised that other systems punch or kick, but as soon as there is a similarity in a "more advanced" maneuver an uproar occurs. "That system stole that move from my teacher," comes the complaint. "That guy is trying one of our moves, but he isn't doing it right," is another. If we stop for a second we will realize that all martial arts have gone through a period of research and development at some point in history.

Each art has essentially the same goal; to stop a human who is bent on ruining you and your day. Since most attackers have one head, two arms and two legs, the problem to be solved is fairly constant so we shouldn't be surprised when the answers that are found also have a lot in common. It is actually a good sign when you find the same move in many different styles. This shows that it has been proven useful to many fighters and will probably be a good addition to your arsenal.

Don't be surprised if every teacher you meet tells you his style is the best. This assertion will often be cloaked in other terms such as "most advanced" (meaning BEST), or "the oldest" (meaning BEST), or "the newest" (meaning BEST), or "unbeatable" (meaning BEST). It isn't that the teacher is lying, because he probably really believes he is telling the truth. It is just that they haven't done enough research themselves to see the limitations of his system or

Using the JKD Concept to blend motions from various arts. (1) Starting position. (2) Fake High; from Jun Fan Gung Fu and others. (3) Side kick to the thigh; Jun Fan, Savate, Karate, etc. (4) Parry with right hand while punching with left hand; Wing Chun, Pentjak Silat, Kali, Boxing, etc. (5) Left upward elbow while right hand checks the opponent's rear hand; Pentjak Silat, Kali, AHA, etc. (6) Left grab with right elbow strike; Found in every art imaginable. (7) Step in with right leg while right elbow applies leverage; Silat, Aikido, Hsing-I, etc. (8) Drop right elbow into chest for throw; Silat, Hsing-I, Capoeira, etc. (9) Securing opponent's right arm while punching with the right fist; Everybody has figured this out!

to realize that real fighting is a vast subject in which the almighty system can often be overcome by extraneous variables such as weapons, multiple attackers or environment.

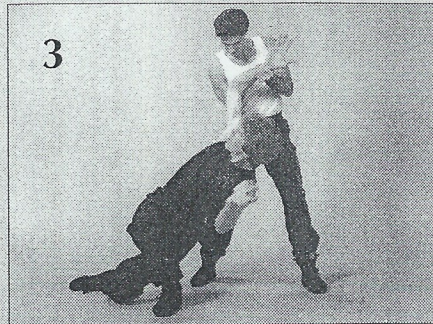
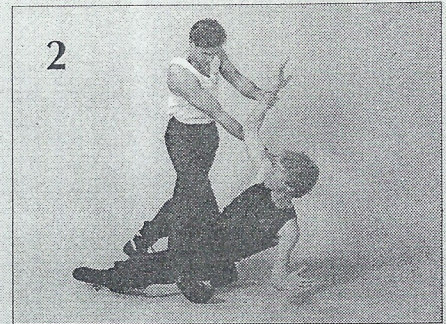
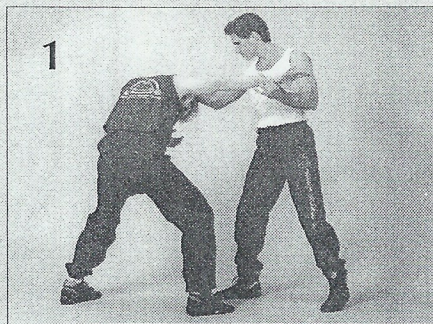
The best grappler will be in trouble against three opponents just as a champion kickboxer is going to have a hard time with a sword-wielding attacker. Find the benefits offered and grow from there.

Don't be surprised when your new classmates eventually think you are stupid. This can be tough, but it is understandable if you look at the situation from their point of view. Here are a group of people convinced that their style is the very best. Here you are, from an inferior system, coming in to finally get the real thing, the creme de la creme of martial erudition. At first you are accepted as being an enlightened one who has seen the error of his ways. The trouble starts, though, when someone discovers you haven't given up your other training or that, heaven forbid, you are embarking on another new style as well. The logic of the classmates goes something like this.

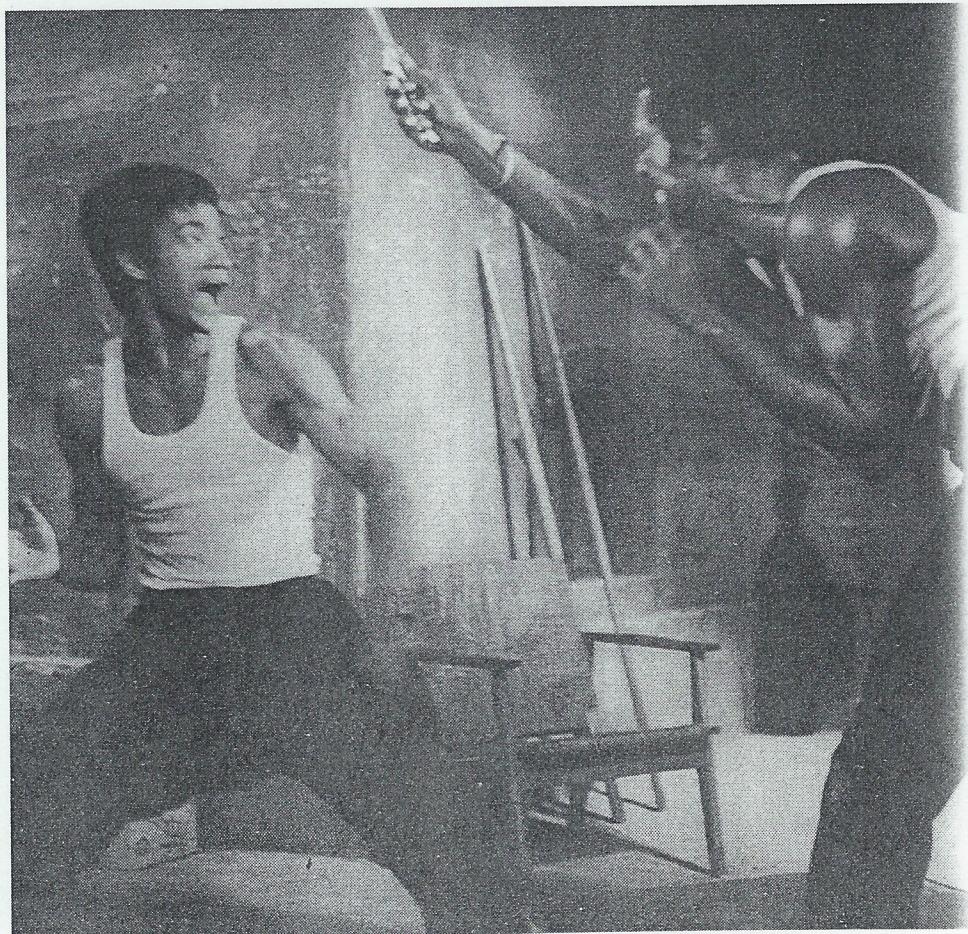
"Now, if you are so privileged to be learning the best system on earth (ours, you dimwit) and you aren't smart enough to give up all the other useless, inferior ways, then we have no alternative but to call you exactly what you have proven yourself to be; an idiot!" Don't take it personally.

Don't be surprised if you start enjoying the arts more than ever. Sticking to just one style can be similar to being in one room of a large house. It may be comfortable, but once someone opens a door to another room with all its features, your mind starts working faster. If that door leads to this

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Similar throw found in various arts (1) Starting position. (2) Aikido (notice crossed legs). (3) Pentjak Silat Bukti Negara. (4) Kali.





Similar Wrist-locks from (1) Jiu-jitsu; (2) Kali; (3) AHA.

great room, where will that door over there take me. Go into a few rooms and soon you will realize that there may be hundreds of doors.

Eventually you may find the front door that takes you out of the house and puts the whole experience into perspective. You once thought that the room was large, then you discovered that there was another room. You soon realized that there were many rooms. Ultimately you got to see that all those spaces were part of a finite house that sits under the infinite sky. Your martial arts journey should be the same humbling experience. Don't just sit within your four walls. Get out! Explore! You have the means so do it. Research the technologies the different arts and teachers are willing to share with you, then integrate that knowledge to create new technologies that stem from your unique personal experiences. Develop yourself to utilize those techniques to the highest potential. Bruce Lee did it. You can too.

Burton Richardson is a Southern California-based JKD instructor and contributing editor of Inside Kung-Fu.