

The Jeet Kune Do Concept

“Using no way as way, having no limitation as limitation.” So profound for those who can grasp the meaning, then live by the standardless standard. This is transcendence.

By **Burton Richardson**

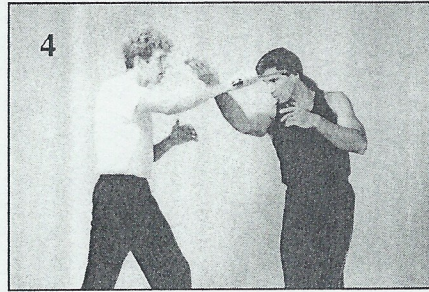
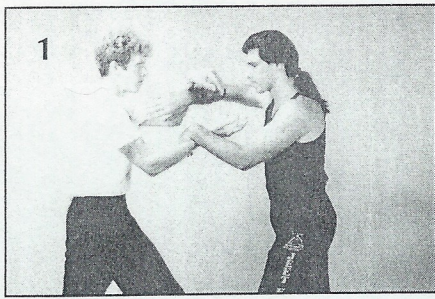
Bruce Lee. He was a phenomenon. Everyone who saw him was duly impressed. Those who actually worked with him were awed. Bruce Lee took his art to uncommon levels, far beyond what most people would deem merely great.

He was special. So special that 20 years after his passing the memory of Bruce Lee lives on as inspiration to millions. Yes, the founder of Jun Fan gung-fu and the jeet kune do concept has been gone a full 20 years, yet most school children know his name. Why the adulation? Why the reverence? Why did someone pay \$29,000 for his one-page, handwritten letter of affirmation? Simply because he actually accomplished his dreams.

We all want to have the discipline to break down the barriers that keep us from achieving our goals and enjoying success. Bruce Lee proved to everyone that it could be done as he went far beyond the limits that were imposed upon him. According to the movie industry Bruce was too short, too small, and definitely too ethnic. He even had an accent! How in the world could this guy possibly think that he would be-



Bruce Lee took his art to uncommon levels, far beyond what most people would deem merely great.



Wing chun sensitivity can be enhanced by kali sensitivity drills. (1-3): a chi sao drill from wing chun. (4-6): A different type of energy developed through kali knife flow.

come a Hollywood actor, much less a superstar? Therein lies his appeal. He paid no mind to what society thought, or American culture thought. Instead, he set his "impossible" goal and ultimately changed our culture forever.

Cultural bias

Bruce Lee transcended cultural bias in the performing arts just as he transcended style in the martial arts. He used his understanding of martial arts as a blueprint for achievement in life. I believe this is the greatest benefit of training in the arts. With a little luck you may never get into another fight for the rest of your life.

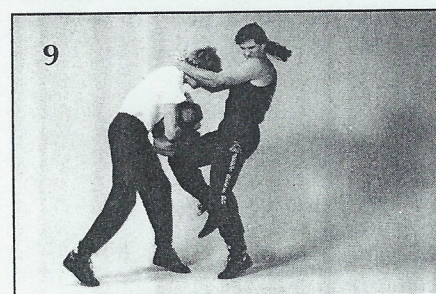
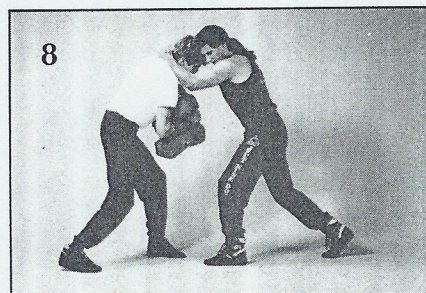
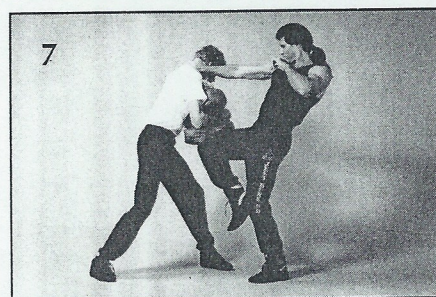
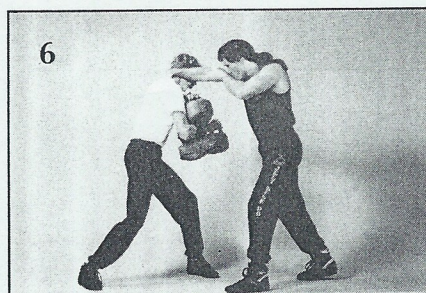
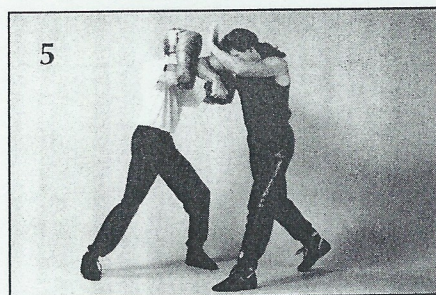
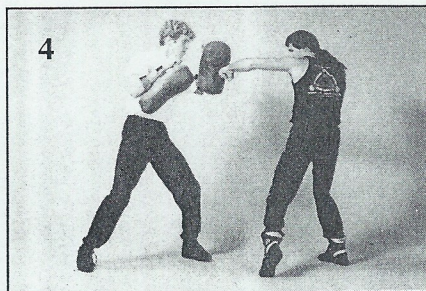
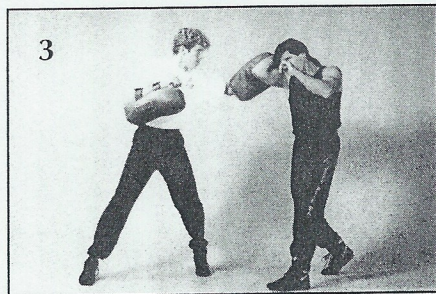
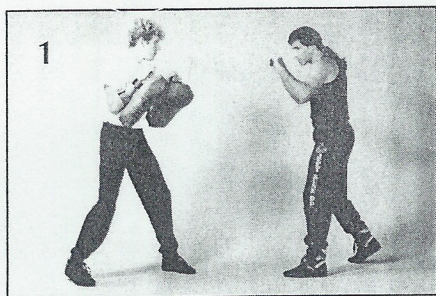
So what good is learning the intricacies of kicking and punching and trapping and grappling? Why spend the hours that turn into years pondering the questions of counters and timing and all the other variables that stand between the artist and his goal. Because the understanding that one attains from dealing with problems and relating to people can be used every day. The philosophies

can create calm in your life where before there was turmoil. The environment doesn't change, but your method of handling the stress does.

Imagine that you had no training at all. A street thug approaches and asks for a handout in a menacing tone. You shrink in fear and hand over the cash. Maybe the same situation occurs after six months at the kwoon or dojo. With a little training you may stand up to him, get in a brawl, and end up rolling around on the ground. You go home with your money, a few bruises, and torn clothes. What might happen after a few years of honing your skills? With ample training you crisply kick him in the shins, trap and hit while making a smooth transition into a foot sweep.

This is good, but not the ultimate. With complete training you look him in the eye with the calm confidence of a person who is in total control of the situation. The hardened thug quickly changes his tune as you joke with him about the situation. He leaves and nobody is hurt. You have transcended the





Muay Thai kickboxing training is great for developing timing, accuracy, speed, power and stamina. In this example, Scot Sleigh prepares to train Burton (1). Burton parries right cross (2). And covers on left hook (3). Burton returns with a left hook (4), right elbow cross (5), grabs the neck with his right hand (6), and throws a long-range knee (7). Burton ties up with both hands (8) and alternates knees (9).

violent situation using your martial arts skill; the art of fighting without fighting. The situation didn't change, you changed! It is ironic that to get to this level one must search out the truth and actually experience the truth of the fighting arts. This is what JKD is all about; research and development to go beyond the present-day limits. With this in mind, let us look at this "artless art" so that each of you can break down those barriers.

No way as way

The jeet kune do symbol is a yin/yang with two arrows surrounded by Cantonese characters. Translated, the characters mean, "Using no way as way, having no limitation as limitation." So profound for those who can grasp the meaning then live by the standardless standard. This is transcendence.

Webster's Dictionary defines the word "transcend" as "to go beyond the limits of; exceed." That is what Bruce Lee did with his art and his life and this is exactly what he wanted his students to do. He wanted people to progress as he did. He went from training in an art to exploring many systems to creating his own style called Jun Fan gung-fu. Later he created the jeet kune do concept that went beyond style and ultimately wished that he had not even named a philosophy of expression that was so individualized that to name it was to limit it.

"No limitations" is the guiding philosophy. From this came the creed, "Man, the living creature, the creating individual, is always more important than any established style or system." Blasphemy! How could a mere mortal put himself above an almighty style? This turnaround is a key to liberating oneself from the follower's mentality that will doom a person to a life of trying to seek approval from others. Happiness is within. The art is also within. You are the art. You should not strive to merely "do the art well". Instead, strive to be the art, let your own personal experience and expression shape your art.

Training in several styles will provide you with the materials to sculpt your ever-changing masterpiece. Yes, styles and systems are important as they make



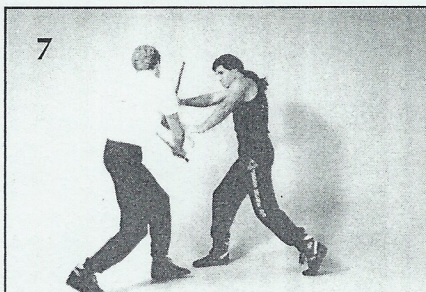
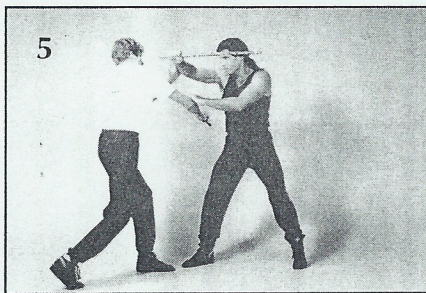
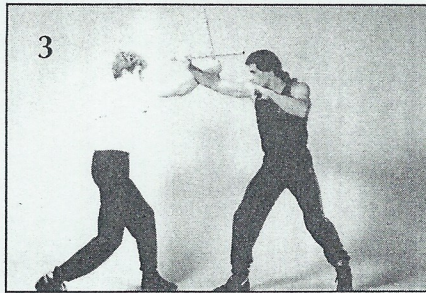
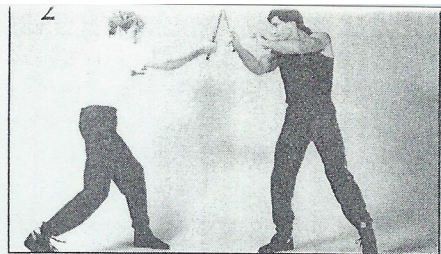
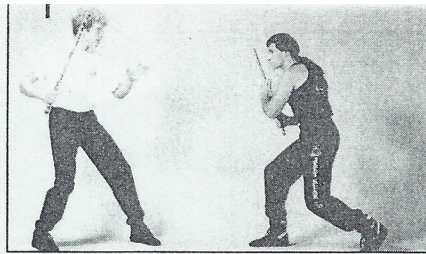
the learning process easier, but beware of traps. Systems are like the super-deluxe motorhome. What was once designed to provide transportation to the freedom and natural beauty of the mountains becomes so comfortable that you have a hard time venturing away from the air-conditioning and "Wheel of Fortune".

Guiding light

Let's take a look at the dilemma of sticking to a style or styles. This may seem a little esoteric, but please stay with me. First, I am going to assume that you want to become the best that you can be at the physical art. You are not just looking for the approval of your friends or classmates. You are determined to set yourself on the steady path of constant improvement that will last the rest of your life.



Strive to be your art, Bruce Lee would have said. Let your personal experience and expression shape your art.



Kali single-stick training will improve reaction time and trapping prowess. Scot and Burton square off (1). Scot delivers a forehand strike toward the hand, which Burton blocks (2). Burton torques his right forearm toward the right to deflect Scot's arm (3). Burton traps and delivers the butt of the stick (4), which is blocked (5). Burton grabs Scot's left hand away (6) and delivers a strong backhand strike while pulling Scot's left arm over his right (7).

So then, what are the truths that guide our training? First we must realize that we cannot know what is going to transpire in a real, no-rules, all-out fight. The fight may be against one or many, armed or unarmed, in any or all ranges of combat. This is important because it proves that actual fighting does not occur within any arbitrary parameters. Therefore, it logically follows that if the event is unlimited in scope then the training should also be as unlimited as possible. There are certain limits on training such as available time, maintaining safety, and the inherent limited potential of the human body. With these understood, we should not place any other restrictions on the task of bettering ourselves. This is where styles, while useful, can become a hindrance.

Unlimited potential

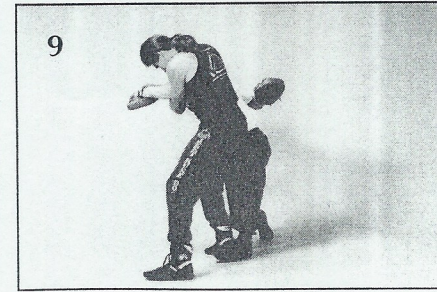
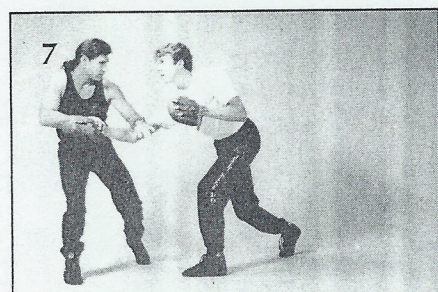
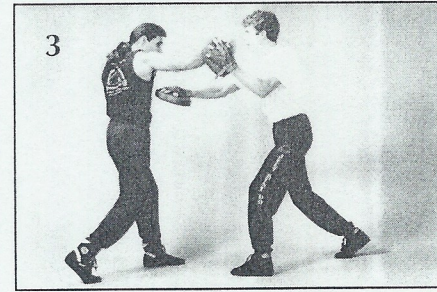
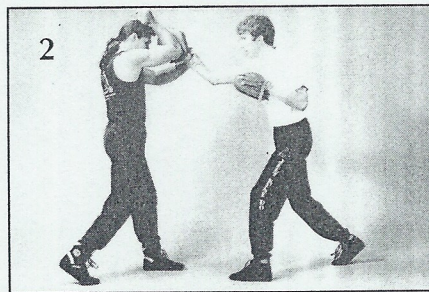
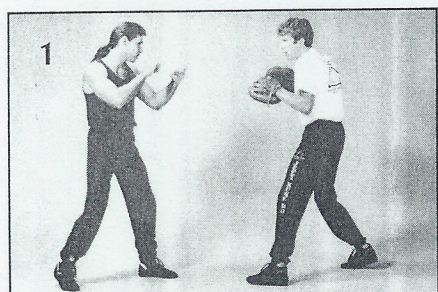
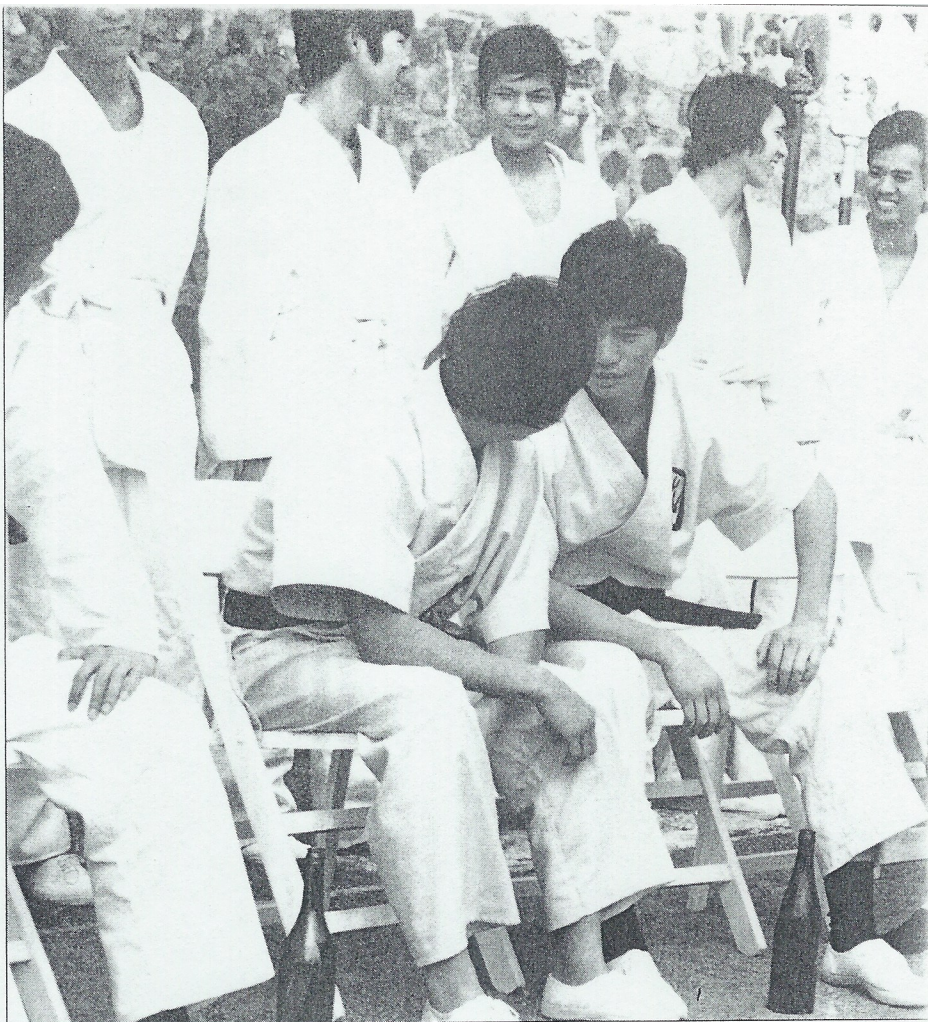
Saying that you do "this style" automatically implies that you don't do "that style". Martial art is unlimited. Each style or system is a very small portion of the whole. If you only do "this", then you are not doing "that", or "that", or "that" over there. Style is man made, and therefore limited. Most systems are the expression of just one or a few founders that had the experience and creativity to formulate a method of training. While the system may be very effective, it cannot be complete if the practitioner must stay within certain boundaries of technique or training method. How many times have you heard an instructor say "No, no, no. That is all wrong. Do it like this."

While improving a student's efficiency is valid, saying that something is

“wrong” is hardly true. There is always a time for everything. Maybe the teacher should say that the move is okay, but under these circumstances there are more efficient choices. With this attitude you have transcended style and are working on relating to an actively changing situation.

To further illustrate the point of going beyond style we can compare two popular methods that are very different. Tae kwon do has a spectacular arsenal of long-range kicks. At closer range the hand work is simple, but effective. Judo players prefer to work at close range for throwing and grappling on the ground. Also very effective when performed well. Most tae kwon do fighters want to stay at long range while the judo adept prefers entering immediately.

The question is, “Who is right?”. Actually, it all depends on the situation. If the kicker can stay at long range and be effective then it is right. If the grappler can close and finish on the ground then that method is also correct. Both styles of fighting will work. The only problem is that the fighter may not be able to maintain the desired range in a combat situation.



A kali technique can be practiced with full speed and power using focus glove training concepts from Jun Fan gung-fu. In this example, Scot Sleigh holds for Burton (1). Scot throws a right cross, which Burton guides into his elbow (2). Burton flows into a right backfist (3), left hook (4) and right elbow (5). Burton turns the right elbow into a right grab with a left hook (6). Scot is off-balanced with an arm drag (7), which Burton turns into a figure four lock with an elbow strike (8). Burton turns for a takedown (9), follows Scot down (10) and applies the heel kick (11). Burton punches while locking up Scot (12) and works for the finishing hold (13).

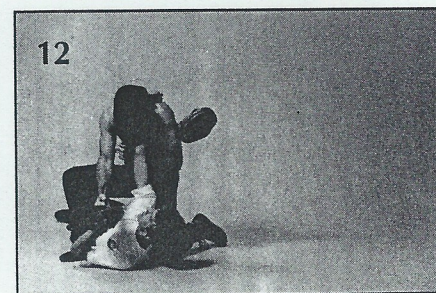
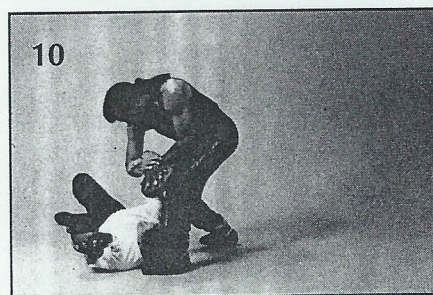
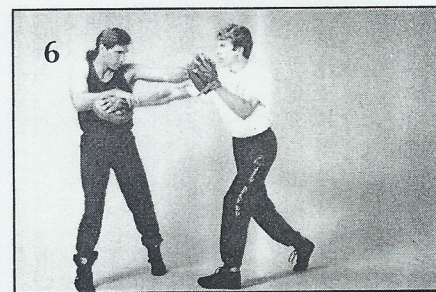
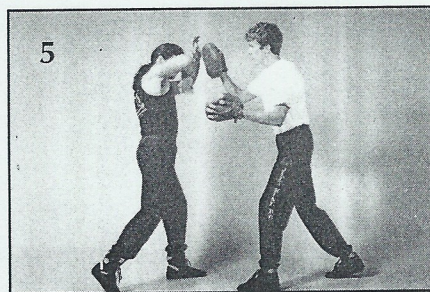
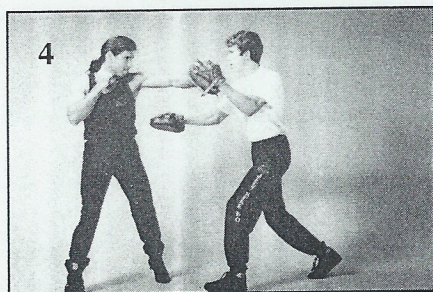


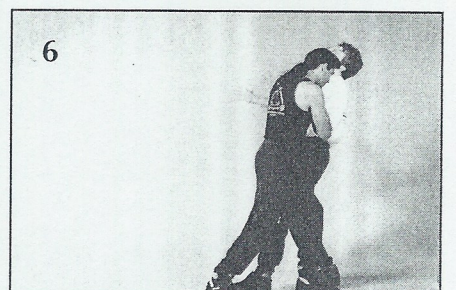
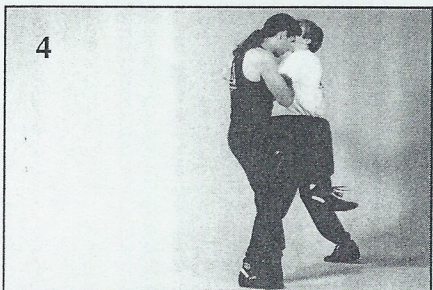
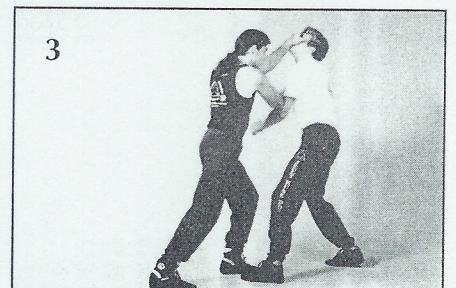
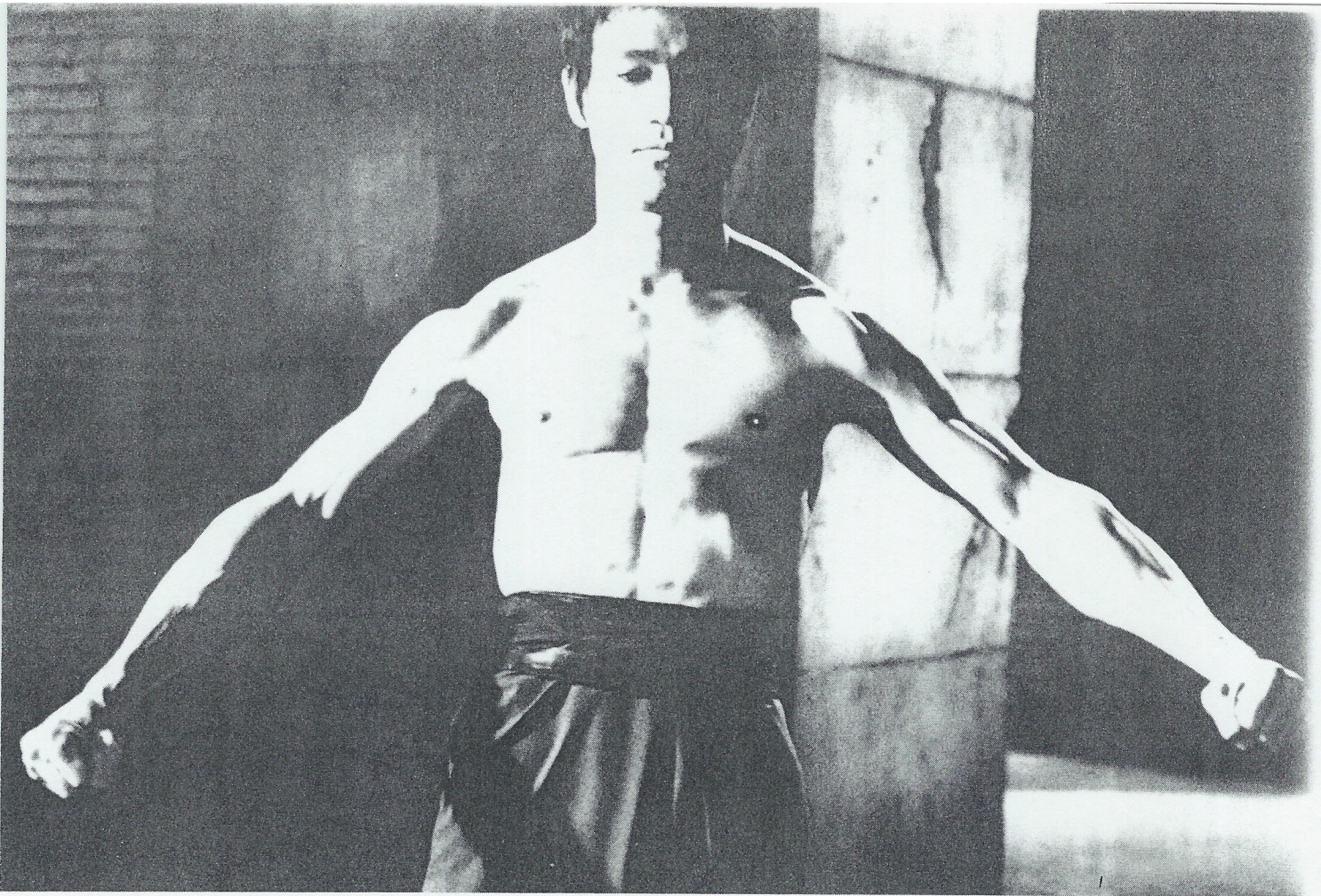
Start flowing

Remember the first truth of all-out fighting? We can't always know or dictate the environment. What happens if the kicker gets in a fight while wading through the snow? What if the grappler has three club-wielding attackers? Different situations call for unique responses. These are the times to throw the limitations of style out the window and start flowing. Such problems occur because of limitations.

Tae kwon do is effective, but limited. Judo is effective, but limited. How about the Jun Fan gung-fu system created by Bruce Lee himself? Limited. Definitely effective, but definitely limited. More blasphemy? Actually, this is just the truth. This is why the jeet kune do concept was expressed. We want to do away with all limits in training, fighting, and thought. We want to "use no way as way and have no limitation as limitation." This is also why Lee was later sorry that he had coined the term "jeet kune do" which means the "way of the intercepting fist."

Giving limitless expression a name is like putting a gallon of water from a





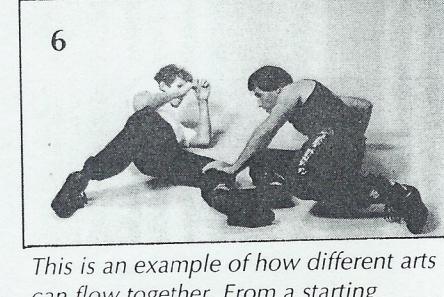
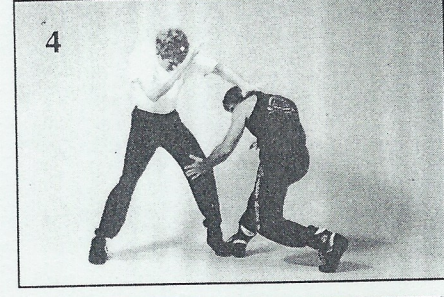
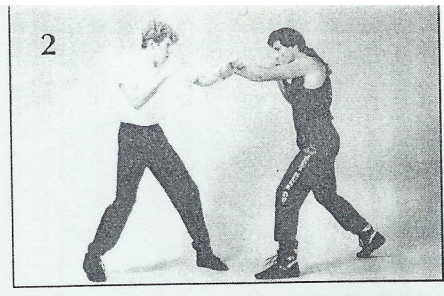
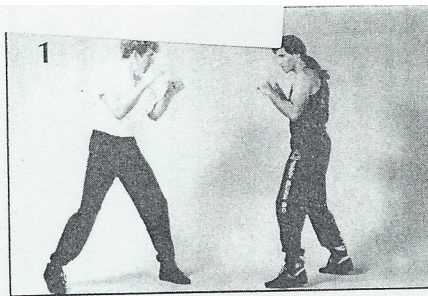
After using a Jun Fan entry, pentjak silat bukti negara is used to enhance the takedown. In this example, Burton uses a pak sao da (trap and hit), but the punch is blocked (1). Burton traps the blocking hand while pinning the left arm with his elbow (2). Burton palms the face (3), shuffles in (4) and does a Jun Fan leg reap while pushing Scot backward (5). After the same entry, Burton steps in deeper (6), turns Scot to his side (7) and then sweeps, leaving Scot with a much harder fall (8).

raging river into a bottle and expecting it to retain the dynamic power. People will start thinking that you must intercept something to "do" JKD. To "do" one thing means that you must differentiate your actions from all other things. If I "do" JKD then I "don't do" tae kwon do, or judo, or boxing, or savate, etc. Intercepting an attack is great, but you can't always pull it off. Sometimes you have to block, or evade, take a shot. It depends on the situation and on your own skills and preferences. Again, you must "be" JKD, which is actually just being yourself. Train for proficiency in all ranges of combat by borrowing from any style you can, then put it all together. The goal in the JKD concept is to flow efficiently in and out of all ranges of combat, while armed or unarmed, against one or many armed or unarmed opponents.

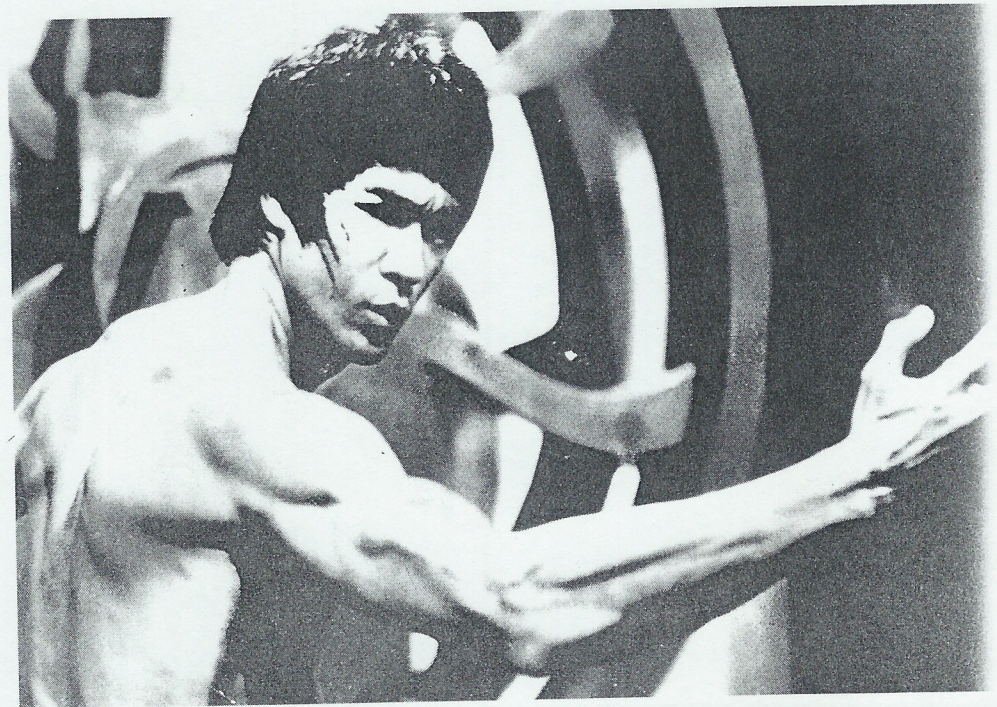
Here are a few examples of how one can possibly blend styles to improve fighting or training efficiency. Let's be sure to get out of the limiting mentality of strict style. Instead of being so attached to a system of fighting, try looking for the truth. For example, one of the "rules" of Jun Fan gung-fu is to keep your strong side forward. If you are right-handed, you fight from a right lead. This way the weapons closest to your opponent (lead hand and foot) will be very strong. Many people are weak on the left side and are better off with the left punch coming from the rear where it can generate more power.

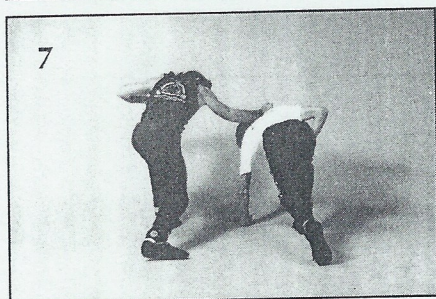
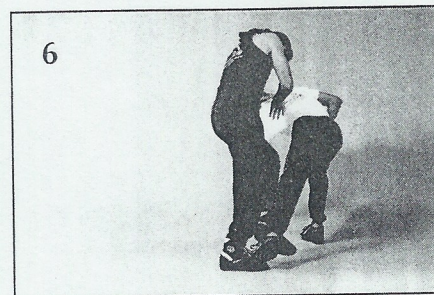
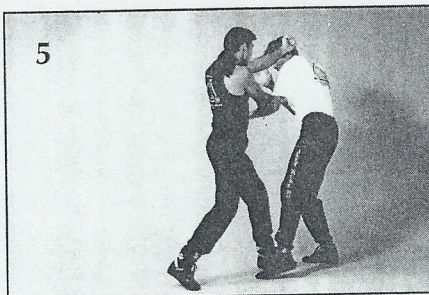
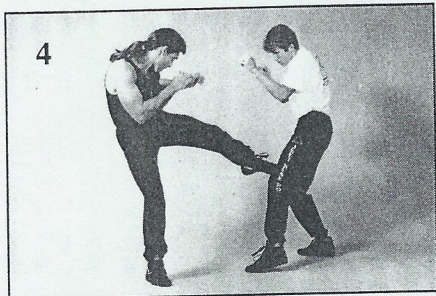
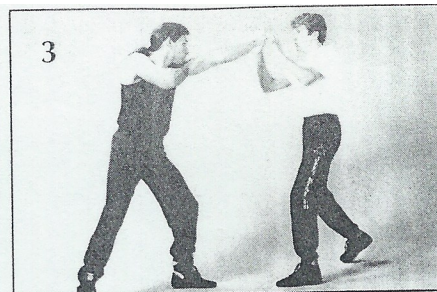
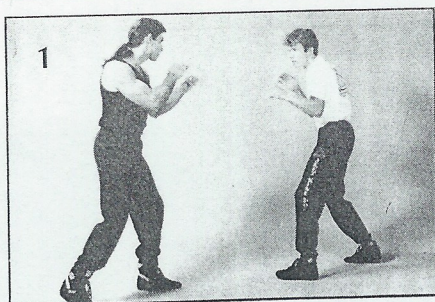
Classical mess

Now I want you to think about this idea and determine if it is true all of the time. What is the essence of this idea? The real idea is to be sure that the weapons nearest the opponent are strong. Many people stuck in the Jun Fan gung-fu classical mess, which is often called JKD, ridicule those who fight in a left lead. What they don't understand is that people who spend a lot of time training in a kickboxing art develop their left side until it has more than enough power. It is interesting to note that there was a time that most Jun Fan practitioners would practice kickboxing from a left lead and trapping from a right lead. This could become a problem when entering from



This is an example of how different arts can flow together. From a starting position (1), Burton performs (2) a Jun Fan lop sao (grab and hit). Scot raises his elbow and protects his head, leaving the high targets unavailable (3), so Burton flows into harimau silat (4), by dropping to the ground, trapping Scot's left foot, and pulling inside the left knee (5). From here, Burton chooses to flow (6) into Brazilian jiu jitsu, trapping Scot's knee (7) and going to the mount position.





This sequence combines elements from six arts. Burton and Scot are ready (1). Scott throws a right cross and Burton uses a kali destruction to an arm nerve (2). Burton uses a feint from Jun Fan to draw Scot's attention up (3), then uses the roundhouse kick from French savate with the toe of the shoe to the inside of the leg (4). Burton moves in with a trap and forearm smash from Indonesian tjimande (5), then uses the angles of pentjak silat to sweep Scot's lead leg (6). Burton finishes with a hammerfist from shaolin kenpo karate (7).

kicking range to trapping.

It is preferable to train right and left lead in all ranges. This way you won't end up in a situation where you feel awkward flowing from left to right when someone foils your technique. Failed technique brings us to another truth.

All techniques can be countered. That is our second premise for real combat. It is not the move itself, but rather the individual's attributes that makes a technique work. Mixing training methods from different arts often results in a synergistic effect where twice the work means three times the benefit. Chi sao is a great sensitivity drill from wing chun kung-fu. Combine this with similar drills from Filipino kali and the new variables expand the limits of your training.

Body leverage

Understanding body leverage is an attribute that is taken to a high level in Indonesian pentjak silat bukti negara. Learning the methods of bukti negara can enhance any martial artist. The leg

reap in Jun Fan is very effective. Adding a different type of leverage and changing the angle of the throw makes it much tougher for an opponent to counter. By blending the different arts you have just improved your personal fighting method. Another example is to take an empty-hand technique from kali and add a Jun Fan training element to make your practice more efficient. Kali techniques are often performed on a partner. This is

"The more systems you understand, the bigger your library of options. Train in different arts and learn when to use them."

good for developing a proper sense of distance and accuracy. Speed can also be added when the student displays good control. A key attribute that is missing is power. You can't very well practice full power on your friend, so we add the focus glove training concepts from Jun Fan. Limb destructions and other striking can be done with speed, precision, and power without inhibiting the trapping and locking. This makes the training closer to the reality of a fight, which is what we strive for during practice. The key concept here is to practice all techniques with control on a partner, and full power on equipment.

The more systems you understand the bigger your library of options. Depending on the circumstances you may use elements from four or five different arts in the same technique. Train in different arts and learn when to use them. Even more important than the accumulation of information is the wisdom that comes from looking for the reoccurring truths in the different arts.

Here is a statement by Dan Inosanto, the foremost practitioner and head of the JKD concepts, that sums up this theory:

"An individual cannot learn the principal roots of jeet kune do through the accumulation of many different styles; for that would be like a singer trying to improve his voice by accumulating many songs. Rather, it is by understanding the roots of the problem."

For those who are practicing Jun Fan gung-fu, or JKD concepts, or "original JKD" or any other system, remember that you only limit yourself by closing your minds to other styles. Unfortunately, many so called JKD instructors are the ones whose minds are closed the most; they think that they have found the "ultimate style." Just keep in mind that we train in Jun Fan, a style.

Through practice and study we understand the art. By researching other arts we can better the original art. We can add even more through our own creativity which can be developed through meditation and other methods of enhancing spiritual awareness. Every-



one will come to a different conclusion about his personal art. Just don't try to force "your way" on anyone. Instead, show them how to bring "their own way" out. Take this knowledge and apply it to your everyday life and you will have no limits to your success. Train in

the art, transcend the art, then use the experience every day, with every breath.

Burton Richardson has several successful videotapes available on the art of jeet kune do. For more information, write Unique Publications/Video, 4201 Vanowen Pl., Burbank, CA 91505; (818) 845-2656.

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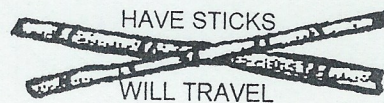
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