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# EL BUDOKA<sup>2.0</sup>

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Exclusive interview

## JOAQUÍN MARCELO JUN FAN JKD

The Way of Simplicity

李小龍

Fujita Saiko, the last Ninja

Reiki and Chikung

IX Annual Meeting of Kajukenbo KSDI

Learn Classical Budo in the West

Kyokushin Karate, Shihan Beltrán interviewed

Power Training

Ueshiba & Saito, Iwama's Aikido







*“Physical endowments may diminish with age, but wisdom does not. The thing is to know how to put it into practice...”*

his pupils will follow that path now, taking with them, aside from that “road map”, all those teachings, advices and remembrances inherited from a humble man who really left his imprint on our lives.

**Jesse Glover and Jerry Poteet also passed away recently. It seems that pupils and friends of Bruce Lee are leaving us. Could you train with them on a regular basis? Which qualities would you emphasize from each one of them?**

Yes, as I told you, I was private student of Jerry. As he

said himself, I was his first instructor outside the U.S.A. (as was also the case with Sifu Ted) and, at the time, I was his student number 12. I did not get to know Jesse Glover, just met him during the first seminar organized by the “JKD Nucleus” in San Francisco, together with most Lee students.

But, contrary to the common habit nowadays, to attend a seminar does not give you the right to claim having trained with that person. You can only say that you attended that seminar, just as the rest of the participants did.

**You are the oldest Ted Wong student in Europe.**

**How and when did you meet Ted Wong?**

I had contacted him by fax to ask to be tutored in his home, which he finally accepted, and I travelled to Los Angeles in the fall of 1993.

**Can you tell us how his lessons were, and how Ted Wong was as a teacher?**

His private lessons were different from his seminars. He was a reserved person. He felt more comfortable training “one-to-one” than leading a course with many people. In his private lessons we did not always work the same things; even though he always kept the structure of the art, each year he taught you a different “small detail”. He learned the art of JKD from Bruce Lee, but did not keep tied to that teachings and kept evolving. As a teacher, my personal opinion is that he pretty much adapted to the qualities of each student: he could be meticulous and insist on a small detail from a certain technique, or he could be very patient and let the pupil go on, so as not to crowd him. In the seminars he rarely insisted with anyone, it happened more in private classes.

I do not know how his private classes with other students ran, I can only tell how his training sessions with me were, as well as what I could see from what he taught in seminars. There is something interesting to mention: in recent reunions with some other of his private students, we could establish that, even if principles were the same, he did not teach all of us the same way, but based his teaching on the inherent particularities of each one of his students. A true example of what is JKD in itself.

**Can you tell us how your training with Ted Wong was at the start? Which aspects were worked harder and which were not?**

Ted Wong only accepted public teaching at the beginning of the 90’s, remained until then in the shadows and saw how the art of Bruce Lee was misinterpreted. He said that it took him 15 years to assimilate and perfect what he learned from his teacher. Since I knew him until about 1997, Sifu Ted evolved a lot. Even if his way of teaching was the same, the next time he saw you he could teach you other angles to place a stroke or propose small modifications in your biomechanics to improve the efficiency of your technique. An ever greater mobility,

but in a very subtle way, and an ever finer footwork. Maybe, what he worked harder with me was the footwork and its application to techniques. He used to say that in JKD, footwork is everything.

**How is your training nowadays?**

When my work forces me to travel, I concentrate most of all on keeping fit. While I stay in Madrid, I train with my group.

**Do you see any failings in Jeet Kune Do?**

There is no such thing as a perfect martial art, or a perfect fighting system. It all depends on fitting to the particularities of each individual. The particularity of JKD is just that: adaptability. But even so, in spite of the evolution the martial arts have undergone in recent years, maybe ground fighting might be considered the less developed aspect. Through their drawings and notes you can observe that Bruce, in fact, were studying ground fighting. And even showed it in some scenes of his movies, which in those years was particularly innovative, since Hong-Kong films from that time were based on fights and superhuman jumps.

However, the founder of JKD was in the act of investigating this side of fighting and you could say that he did not get to develop it in the full, which he did with stand-up fighting, an aspect still fully current nowadays and even with some less than fully explored nuances, as the extrapolation of fencing principles to the unarmed fight. But in the years JKD was developing, ground fighting had a different approach to the one given in the last two decades, and that is why I think the JKD student should evolve beyond the teachings of the founder to fit modern times.

**What makes in your opinion a good teacher of the art of Jeet Kune Do?**

For me, a good teacher, in general terms, is someone who sets a good example, someone who does not leave a pupil with the doubt, “I would do it so well if I did it”. Talk is easy, what is difficult is doing what you talk about. One never goes wrong if they do not run the risk of going wrong, and many martial art teachers stand on their unattainable pedestal, from which they never get down, showing off to their students as a “superior being” who can strike down anyone if they mean to... But it remains always in theory. A good teacher

Photo Jesús Dechus

must be able to do himself what he expects from the pupil. He must be someone close and humble, even if keeping the respect (if respect is lost, everything is lost), but treating students as the people they are, which means no better or worse than oneself. In the typical traditional martial figure, the teacher appears almost godlike (an image which teachers themselves promote) and I totally disagree with those beliefs. But strictly speaking about Jeet Kune Do, where individuals are always more important than the art itself, a good teacher must be a "pointer of the way", be able to see the strong and weak points of each student and drive them through the most suitable way for each of them. A good teacher should not limit the student ("It is JKD only if you do as I say") or create confusion ("Do several things, we shall mix them and call it JKD"). A good JKD teacher should have a solid foundation of knowledge, not just technical knowledge, which of course is needed, but also of the principles and the philosophy which turn this fighting method into an art.

**I have heard that you are about to publish a book on Jeet Kune Do, could you tell us something about its contents?**

Yes, a book which I started writing in the spring of 2006, and which will shortly see the light at last. It is a very complete book about the art of Bruce Lee. It does not only discuss in detail its technical aspect, showing every small details at the disposal of the student when it comes to practice during training, but it goes also about the very roots of the art, about psychophysical qualities, about cadence and timing, about the approach of ground fighting in JKD, about combative tactics which Bruce extrapolated from fencing and where I counted on the help of the fencing epee national team, and even a whole chapter solely devoted to the psychological study, without a single technical part: it is the chapter about combat.

This book is not only a learning guide to Jeet Kune Do, but also a wide and comprehensive study on the original sources that influenced the founder, taken from the books Bruce had in his private library. A lot of the information contained in this book is unpublished up to this date.

*"Some martial arts might help you to defend yourself, but if your brain does not react the right way at the critical moment, all your previous training will be quite useless"*

**Could Ted Wong see part of this book? If he did, what was his opinion?**

Ted Wong supervised the book up to a year before his passing. Since I started writing, a professional translator started putting it into English, and Sifu Ted gave me his opinion and advice. He was very excited about the book. You can say that about 80% was supervised by him. During his last year I did not send what I wrote, because his health was not good, but for different cause that brought about his death, which took us by surprise. I am very sad that he could not see the book published at last.

His favourite chapter was the one about strategies and tactics, most of which Bruce took from fencing, where many misinterpretations around JKD are explained. I personally think that he would have liked a lot the psychological chapter "Swimming in the water", if he had read it. Sadly, he did not get to read that one.

**Were you able to read any book from Bruce Lee's personal library?**

Yes. First of all, Sifu Ted pointed to me the most influential books about fencing and boxing in Bruce's library. I kept acquiring others, sometimes with help of

third persons. Thanks to the kindness of Shannon Lee, I had the chance to study Bruce's private library, and I was really impressed when I saw the big amount of books he owned. From about 2.500 books, 1.200 were about several types of combat, and the rest dealt with various matters such as cinematography, physical fitness, nutrition, psychology, children education, and a wide range of other matters. My respect for the owner of those books grew, because you realized he read them all, since every one of them were underlined and showed notes on the side. To make a comprehensive study of every book in Bruce's library would be a work



Photo Román Rodríguez

that could take years. It is incredible that a man who had a relatively short life could read so much. I do not know where he got the time to do so much.

**Apparently Bruce Lee's personal library included several psychology books. Could you tell us what attracted Bruce Lee from psychology and in what way did he add that science to the martial arts?**

There were many books about psychology and self-help in his library, yes. Bruce lived through many financial problems, racism, personal concerns... A point of inflexion in his life was when he had to spend months flat on his back in bed because of a back injury. He looked in psychology books for a way to help himself facing all those setbacks. He studied Gestalt therapy, from Fritz Perls, and from Carl Rogers he acquired the idea that life is a continuous way to self-discovery. Napoleon Hill helped him to focus on positive thinking when his family went through financial difficulties, and from Krishnamurti he adapted to the field of martial arts the idea that man is more important than any established style. About martial philosophy, maybe his greater inspiration was D.T. Suzuki... Anyway, for everyone who is interested in philosophical and psychological influences on Lee during his life, I recommend Marcos Ocaña's book "El Guerrero de Bambú" ("The bamboo warrior"), which deals extensively on those matters.

**What question would you wish to be asked? You can answer yourself if you want to.**

What do we really look for when we train for martial arts? I do not mean just Jeet Kune Do, but any kind of martial art, even traditional arts... If the end is looking for discipline, self-improvement, physical training, oriental esotericism, or a long list of options available from many martial arts, you are on the right path: all of those things depend on yourself. If what you want above all things is learning to fight for using in the street, it turns relative and depends on a wide range of factors, particularly on the person (or people: sometimes you do not always face a single opponent) you have the fortune or misfortune to face; the circumstances of the moment, which may or may

not be propitious; several aspects, undetectable at first sight, which can tip the scale to one side or the other... sometimes even luck counts! To learn martial arts (and take into account that not every martial art shall teach you to defend yourself with the same amount of realism) is not a warrant of anything in it-

knows their business. I would like people who train in martial arts solely for the hypothetical chance of needing it someday in the street understand that this is not the way. True, some martial arts might help you to defend yourself, but if your brain does not react the right way at the critical moment, all your



Photo Jesús Dechus

***"One never goes wrong if they do not run the risk of going wrong, and many martial art teachers stand on their unattainable pedestal, from which they never get down..."***

self. All around the whole wide world, expert champions in contact sports died as a consequence of a street brawl; their adversary had a hidden weapon and very simply shot them. It does not matter how good you are. Before a really dangerous adversary, the main thing is survival. You might encounter two ham-handed opponents, or maybe a single one who

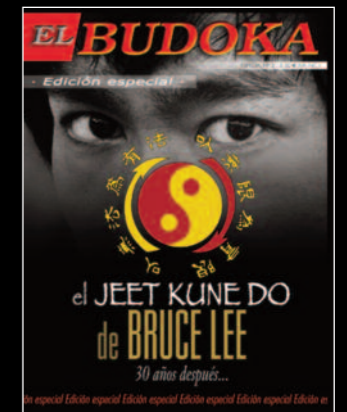
previous training will be quite useless. Train for your chosen martial art just for your enjoyment, and profit from every advantage you derive from its practice, which probably shall be many. Enjoy your training without preconceptions about facing a street fight. Learn to fight just for the fun of it, through sparring and using proper protective equipment to avoid inju-

ries, and not to use it violently against others on the street. Learning to fight has many positive aspects: it releases adrenaline (after a good sparring session you will see that you are not in the mood for arguing), helps to know yourself by observing your reactions under pressure, helps a great deal in subduing your ego (sometimes you lose... and no great deal), helps fighting against mental routine (a combat can be considered many things, but never routine), and of course is a wonderful way to keep fit. But if some day, by misfortune, you are forced to use your natural weapons as a defence, your own instinct shall be there to do its job. And if circumstances are too adverse, you shall lose. Martial arts do not turn anyone into Superman.

I would like to end with the words of James Yimm Lee: *"Fighting ability is something seldom; almost never required, but good health and physical condition benefit people every day of their lives".*

**Para saber más sobre Joaquín Marcelo y el JKD**

**El Budoka** (edición especial)  
**El Jeet Kune Do de Bruce Lee 30 años después...**



Con motivo del aniversario del fallecimiento de Bruce Lee, destacados seguidores de su arte y su filosofía nos explican cómo pensaba y trabajaba éste célebre artista marcial y actor.

Más que probable, es seguro que muchas de las personas que leen esta publicación, en el año 1973 tuvieran muy pocos años o no hubieran nacido todavía; para que éstas se hagan una idea y para que los más mayores se sitúen, les diré que en ese mismo año en que murió Bruce Lee también fallecían Pablo Picasso y Pau Casals, se firmaba en París el "alto el fuego" de la guerra de Vietnam, Carrero Blanco era asesinado en Madrid, George Foreman le arrebató el título mundial de boxeo a Joe Frazier, Buñuel ganaba el Oscar a la mejor película extranjera y el Barça fichaba al holandés Johan Cruyff.

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