

## KARATE



**FLIP-FLOPPING** the normal karate stance to a left handed posture, comparisons to Jeet-Kune-Do (JKD) can be made more readily apparent. Initially, they are very similar.



**IN KARATE**, the rear hand is used to make up most of the attack, giving away the move before it can even get in, above left. When the punch reaches its full extension, the karateka twists his arm and wrist so the fist will spin into a horizontal plane, below, with the index and middle knuckles making contact.



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**PUT BEST FOOT FORWARD** is the maxim here. Dan Inosanto's strongest arm and leg are placed in front in JKD fighting stance so they may be utilized 80 percent of the time.



**IN JEET-KUNE-DO** the lead hand is used 80 percent of the time for attack, above right. The punching fist is used either vertically or at a slight angle for hooking. The contact area of the fist is the middle-ring-little knuckles. Working with heavy bag, wrists can be injured if horizontal karate punch is used.



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"LINE UP TEN PUNTERS and let them perform their kicking styles without the football. Can you honestly judge who is the better kicker, or which is the better kick, by just studying their form? The real test of a punt is how far and accurately the football can be kicked. And yet, this is exactly what many schools of karate and kung-fu are doing—they are teaching how to kick without the football. In other words, deluding their students as well as themselves, karate and kung-fu instructors are attempting to teach how to fight without actually fighting."

This is an ex-kenpo instructor speaking-out on his first love, karate. He's a 33-year-old man who has studied jujitsu, kenpo, kung-fu and karate. He now studies jeet-kune-do (pronounced "jeet-koon-doe") under Bruce Lee. This is Dan Inosanto exploding some hard-hitting thoughts and provoking ideas upon the karate scene today.

A physical education teacher in the Los Angeles area, Inosanto is a quiet-mannered man. He's not a loud talker and is reluctant to offend others. He's married and lives with his wife and three-year-old child (with one more on the way) in a modern house in Carson, California.

It is obvious Inosanto is dedicated to the martial arts and on first impression he seems to like everything about them. Once the surface is scratched, however, one finds Inosanto has some very definite ideas on what's good and bad in the martial arts. His delivery is soft and his voice subdued, but after the interview, it feels like a huge tank has rumbled past, shaking the very foundation of one's philosophy of karate.

Having studied many styles, Inosanto has a broad background in the martial arts; it began when he was in the paratroopers and started taking the Army's self-defense course in jujitsu in 1959. The next year he graduated to karate. The style he and the others in that loose group of enthusiasts were taught depended on which instructor was teaching that day and where he had studied. The course was a crazy blend of styles: Japanese, Korean or Okinawan.

At that time he was stationed at Fort Campbell in the Strategic Army Corps and his group studied karate three to five times a week under the sponsorship of Henry Slomanski. Reflecting on his karate stint while in the Army, Inosanto said, "The exposure to the various schools in the beginning taught me not to be one-sided because everyone had their own philosophies and each school seemed to have its good points and bad points."

After Inosanto was discharged from the paratroopers, he moved to the Southern California area where he began taking kenpo. Why did he choose kenpo, was the question. "I was very impressed with a kenpo student I met at Fort Campbell—I can't remember his name off hand. He wasn't stiff and he seemed freer with his movements. He was graceful, smooth and fast. He had studied kenpo in Hawaii and had a brown belt. I liked the way he moved and decided to take up kenpo when I got out of the service.

"In 1961, I started taking kenpo from Ed Parker at his Pasadena school. At that time, kenpo reached my expectations of what I was seeking in karate. I was looking for a self-defense and also a body conditioning sport. I guess I got carried away

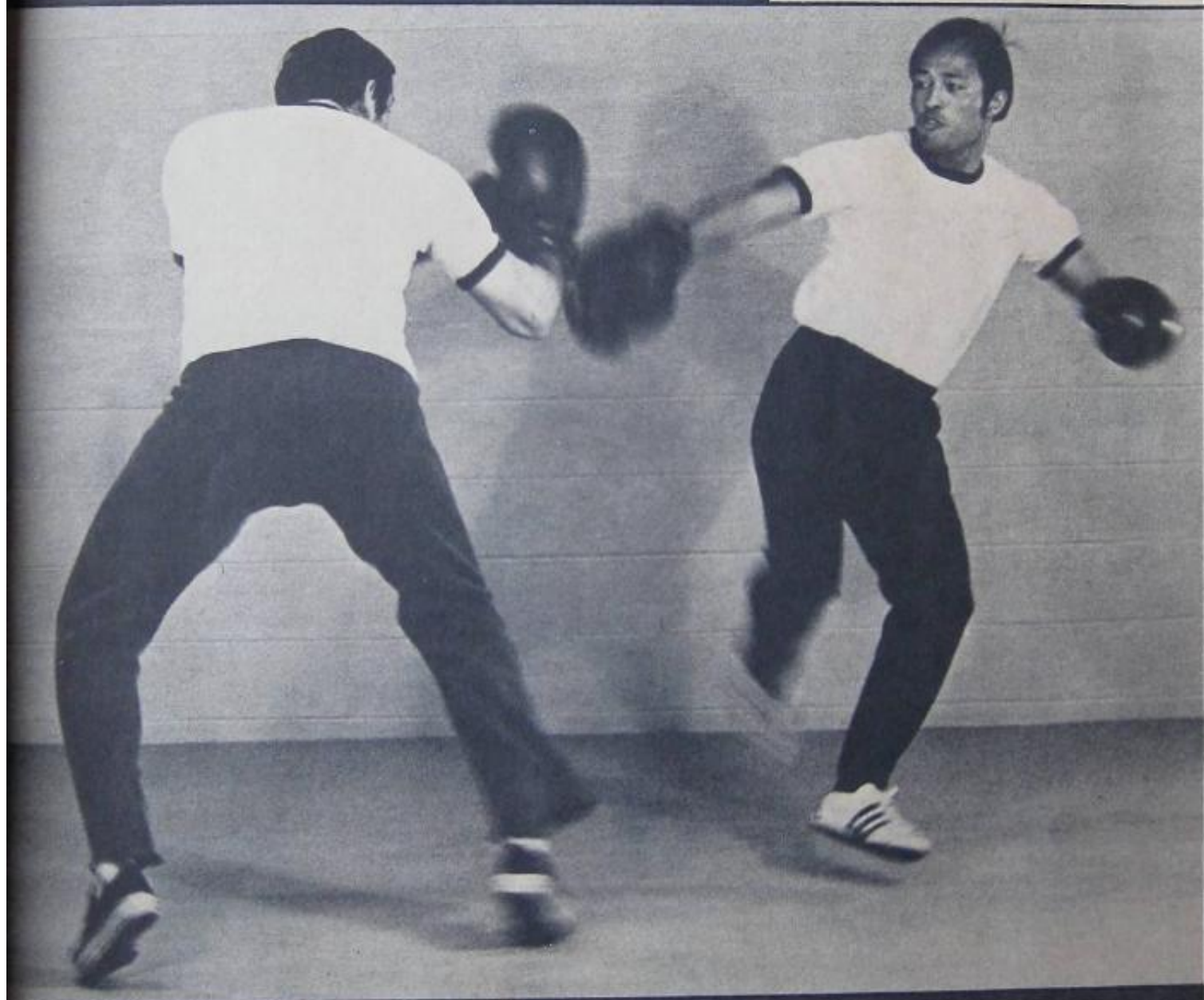


**ELUSIVE** motion is pictured in this series. These photos are not to illustrate form or kata but to show movements necessary to elude and attack at close range. Economy and simplicity are keynote principles to jeet-kune-do movement, a stark contrast to unnecessary kung-fu moves performed out of fighting range.



**“JEET-KUNE-DO  
IS FAST,  
POWERFUL,  
DECEPTIVE”**  
*Dan Inosanto*

By RODGER  
SHIMATSU



PHOTOS BY OLIVER PANG

*A quiet-spoken, dedicated martial artist is this jeet-kune-do instructor. With a broad background in the fighting arts, he reveals some basic flaws in kung-fu and karate training.*

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with it. I became fascinated by the martial arts field and how there could be so many different ways of fighting."

## Clique-ish Karate Factions

Even with the variety of fighting arts, especially in karate, Inosanto found himself in a quandary. "I was puzzled by the attitudes of the instructors and their schools here in Southern California. At Fort Campbell we were learning many different styles at the same time and we felt this was good. There was a give and take of information concerning karate. The various instructors came together to try to help one another. In Los Angeles it was a different story. I never realized how clique-ish karate factions could be. I couldn't understand this and it made me even more curious about karate as a whole. I couldn't believe instructors could be so hostile to one another and refuse to share knowledge.

"When I first began taking kenpo, the instructors and students there would run down the Japanese stylists. So I went to a Japanese karate school out of curiosity and there they ran down the other karate styles I was studying. Looking back at it as a whole, shotokan puts a lot of emphasis on power, while in kenpo karate they put their stock in speed."

As in football, there are various ways to run with the ball and Dan Inosanto used this analogy to drive home his point. "Take the three types of runners in football. A good runner can either have speed, power or deceptiveness. The runner can use any two combinations of the three, but very rarely can one be found with all three outstanding characteristics. Karate schools may stress as many as two, but it's hard to find a school that stresses all three: speed, power and deceptiveness.

"It wasn't until I started learning jeet-kune-do under Bruce Lee. I found a style that used all three important aspects of fighting—a style that was fast, powerful and deceptive. Bruce Lee was able to take all the pieces of the karate puzzle I was wrestling with in my own mind and make them fit together in an integrated system. It seemed to me the other karate and kung-fu schools were trying to fit everyone into a size 38 coat, regardless of an individual's size, speed, build, reaction-time reflexes or anything.

"In boxing, everyone can't be a Marciano because everyone doesn't have the rugged build needed to wade in and take a punch, or have the ability to give one. Not everyone can be a Cassius Clay because they don't have his speed or his deceptive coordination. Looking at each person as an individual, it's not possible to take a 98-pound weakling and make him into another Marciano or Clay.

"Karate in general doesn't take the individual into consideration because the system stresses everyone must do the same things in the exact same way. The karate student becomes a factory product—a molded replica of the instructor. The student sometimes comes out good, sometimes bad, sometimes better than the instructor, but it's hit-or-miss depending on the individual."

## Excell Outside of Style

To Dan Inosanto the individual is very important because, he says, "A man doesn't excell because of his style. It's only

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**DEMONSTRATING** how a karate would attack is Tony Luna, at right. Inosanto shows karate defense. Dan Inosanto

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**ATTACKING** with lunging reverse punch again, Luna is still the karate man. Inosanto slides by the punch, deflecting it.

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**KENPO KARATE**, under the same circumstances, is demonstrated by Inosanto at left, as Luna attacks with a lunging punch.

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**OPENING THE BATTLE** karate man Luna slides by Inosanto's lunging punch.



lunge punch with inward cross block with his lead hand, then returns with a reverse



punch of his own. This defense involves at least three movements and is contrasted



with jeet-kune-do's aggressive defense below.



with his left hand to his shoulder and, at the same time, attacking to the midsection



with his lead hand. The option to hook the forward leg and take the opponent down



with grappling techniques is also open to Dan.



lunge punch. Dan blocks with his lead hand, then returns with a reverse punch



with his rear fist. But in JKD the lead hand is used differently. It is always used



as the attacking hand, while in other karate styles, it's the rear fist which attacks



back, throws a stop punch with lead hand while, at the same time, his left deflects opponent's front fist. It is not a hard block,



just enough for Dan to avoid the blow. In JKD avoiding is as effective as blocking.



**DETECTING** when an opponent is about to kick and jamming it is often easy because most kicking requires some sort of preparation on opponent's behalf to develop power in the kick. In jeet-kune-do, fighting begins from right photo, but in karate, action must be stopped.

when a man can go outside of the bounds set by his system that he excels. If a martial artist can practice in a style without being bound and limited to his particular school, then and only then can he be liberated to fit in with any type of opponent. A great majority of instructors, however, bind their practitioners and brain-wash them into believing only their school of training is best. This is especially true of kung-fu."

Dan met Bruce Lee in 1964 at the first International Karate championships. He got to know Bruce pretty well in the few weeks they traveled from one dojo to another all over Cali-

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fornia. During this period, Inosanto was introduced to Bruce Lee's philosophy. He wanted to study under Lee but the noted jeet-kune-do-ist had to return to the Orient, so Inosanto began taking kung-fu from other instructors in the Los Angeles area. He tried different schools, often studying at two to three schools at the same time.

He soon discovered what he was learning was far different from what Bruce Lee was talking about. The forms, the blocks, the postures—were teaching—the forms, the blocks, the realistic. The means to get good self-defense. The posture and form of the body

weight was a far cry  
To me, what they  
posturings—wasn't  
e became the ends.  
: the ultimate end.

Their teachings didn't seem to have any direct relationship to self-defense, although it probably taught me to be graceful and helped with my coordination, posture and smooth, correct body movements."

### Enlightening But Frustrating

Bruce Lee returned to the United States to star as Kato in the television series "The Green Hornet." Concurrently he opened two kwoons, one in Los Angeles, the other in Oakland, California. Dan began studying under Bruce in L.A. and he recalls it as frustrating but enlightening. "I had been practicing and instructing in a kenpo karate style for some years and I felt at that point, it gave me the most freedom and variety of moves. By that time, I had stumbled across many partial truths and I had become more aware of workable and unworkable techniques. Being a die-hard kenpo man, I found myself confused and frustrated. I began to actually rebel against jeet-kune-do.

"I was bound by loyalty to my former instructor and to the style. Looking back on it, I really didn't want to see the truth in self-defense. I began to mentally criticize the informal and unstylized way JKD (jeet-kune-do) moved, kicked, punched and trained. Yet, I found myself using what I had learned and liking it better than kenpo, finding it more functional, powerful, faster, freer, and above all the easiest style to express."

Just what is jeet-kune-do? Dan says it is *the art of "finishing" with all types of opponents and a way of expressing oneself*

**BRIDGING GAP** with high feint and leg obstruction, at right, Dan slides his high feint into a low lead (2nd photo). At same time, his front leg moves in close to opponent's lead to jam any possible kick counter. Dan follows-up with back fist (3rd photo), but is blocked, so he yields to direction of block and pivots (4th photo) into a spinning back hand or elbow depending on distance.





**SHIN-KNEE-STOP KICK** with leading leg is frequently used in JKD as a simple attack or counter. Here, it is used as a jamming attack to stop opponent's attempted side kick.

combat. Many of Bruce Lee's students are former karate and kung-fu stylists and they maintain JKD's *style-less style* of combat is 50 to 100 years ahead of its time. Dan anticipates karate will continue to progress and will someday reach the beginning stages of ideas and principles set forth by Bruce Lee today. As explained, jeet-kune-do is not an organization or even a style in which students can affiliate. The principles of JKD are stated simply as self-defense, because everything is so dependent on what the opponent will do. It's almost like an exchange of ideas between two combatants with the communication being done with offensive and defensive techniques instead of words. The action must flow like a conversation and the two combatants must be in tune with each other as the fighting reaches its climax and one or the other is taken down, knocked-out, or placed in an otherwise helpless situation.

### Likened to Kickboxing

Spectators watching a jeet-kune-do practice session come away with differing views. The sparring has been described as vicious but polished street fighting. At other times, it looks like boxing, sometimes wrestling and even Thai kickboxing. The kicks resemble karate, but in a more informal, livelier and freer manner. The practitioners use 12 or 16-ounce gloves and they are encouraged to punch and kick below the waist, especially to the shin, knee and thigh areas.

Comparing jeet-kune-do to other fighting arts, Dan observes, "Karate is mainly a stylized form of punching, kicking and

striking. Judo is a throwing, grappling and choking sport. Wrestling is grappling and boxing is a punching sport. All of these arts or sports are highly effective in their range of distance. What boxers call the "in-fighting" range is never reached in karate tournament free styling because the referee usually separates the combatants before they reach this stage of fighting. But in reality, isn't this where real fighting begins?

"If a good boxer learns jeet-kune-do's bridging (transition and moving-in techniques), he needs only his hands to be effective. A proficient wrestler, using jeet-kune-do's techniques, can tie-up the majority of the classical martial artists. If the wrestler is sharp with his grappling range, he will be more than effective. An experienced fencer, if he learns jeet-kune-do techniques, can become very skilled with his outside range.

"A great many karate men have the tendency to belittle, degrade and look down on judo, boxing and wrestling as being inferior to karate. To me it is like a football coach who uses and believes in his split-T formation, then starts to belittle other formations and styles such as the T, wing-T, slot-T, or the I formations. A good football coach, even if he believes in his own style of play, will study and learn how to defend against those offenses. I believe a good martial artist should likewise prepare for the wild street fighter, the wrestler, the slugger, the judoist."

To illustrate the importance of preparing for all types of fighting situations, Dan likes to quote Bruce Lee, who in turn quoted Sun Tzu's book *The Art of War*, written around 500



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FEINTING IS AN INTEGRAL part of JKD to set up the opponent's moves. Photo right, Dan feints high before bridging the gap, immobilizing opponent's lead arm, at the same time, exploding a right hook to Luna's head. Notice Dan's head is safely tucked close to opponent's elbow. Whether opponent parries or not, Dan switches his high hook to a low hook to the groin as a one-two combination and continues to press. If opponent should double up to evade the blow, Dan presses the opponent's hand down with his left and punches in a driving fist to Luna's head.



B.C. "Know your enemy and know yourself and you can fight a hundred battles without disaster."

Explaining this statement, Dan affirms, "Some people think they know themselves but in reality they only know their weak points and not their strong points, or vice versa. Others are intelligent in knowing themselves, but ignorant in knowing others."

"To quote a certain football coach, 'Every system of football has strong points and weak points in its structure. Every football coach believes in his methods of training and drilling. The training and drills should be as close to reality as possible and all drills should be as close to game-like conditions as possible.'"

The quiet spoken Bruce Lee student and jeet-kune-do instructor always kept his conversation in a low tone. He seemed excited or tight with his expressions. It was interesting how Dan Inosanto could demolish this writer's beliefs in such a calm and calm manner. He left with this one quote that seems to sum up his own philosophy and the principles of Bruce Lee's jeet-kune-do: "Totality and freedom of expression toward the ultimate reality of combat should be the goal of all martial arts. To achieve this, absorb what is useful; reject what is useless; add what is specifically your own."