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# Who Was Bruce Lee?



by Jim Gigliotti

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by Jim Gigliotti

illustrated by John Hinderliter

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# Contents

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[Who Was Bruce Lee?](#)

[Birth and Childhood](#)

[Back to the States](#)

[TV Star](#)

[Martial-Arts Pioneer](#)

[Philosopher](#)

[Cultural Icon](#)

[Gone Too Soon](#)

[The Legend Grows](#)

[Timelines](#)

[Bibliography](#)

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# Who Was Bruce Lee?

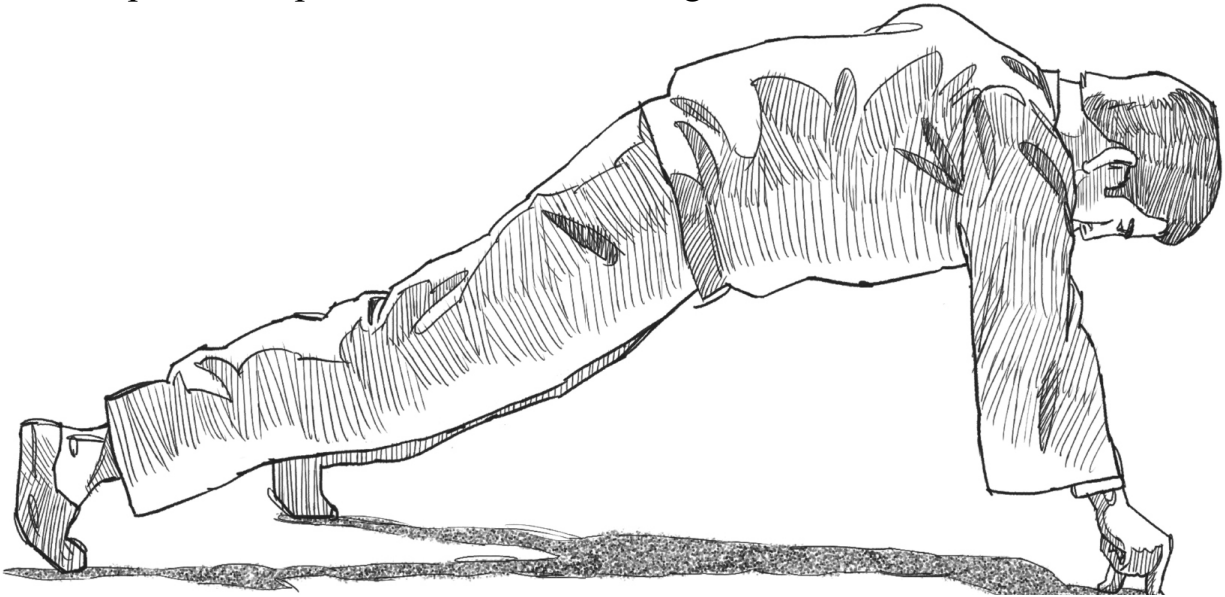
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The spectators at the International Karate Tournament of 1964 in Long Beach, California were amazed. They were watching a twenty-three-year-old young man named Bruce Lee give a demonstration in martial arts. The martial arts are ways of fitness, fighting, and self-defense. Many of them began hundreds of years ago in Asia, in places such as China, Japan, and Korea.

First, Bruce did some push-ups. But these weren't ordinary push-ups. Bruce did them with only one hand. Not only that, he did them using only *two fingers* of one hand. Push-ups are hard enough to do with two hands.

They're almost impossible with two fingers. But Bruce had no trouble. Up, down, up, down—perfect form. What strength Bruce had!



Then Bruce showed what he called a “one-inch punch.” His opponent stood directly in front of him. Bruce pulled his hand back just one inch. He thrust it forward with such force that the other man fell backward into a chair. The other man couldn't stay standing, even though he knew what was coming. What power Bruce had!

Finally, Bruce stood with his opponent right in front of him. Bruce stood perfectly still. Suddenly, Bruce's hands flashed and were in the other man's face before he could react. Bruce didn't hit him or even touch him. He was just showing how quick he could be. What speed Bruce had!

News of Bruce's amazing performance that day reached a Hollywood producer. He thought Bruce might be the right actor for a new television series. The part needed someone who could be a superspy, like a Chinese James Bond. So the producer asked Bruce to come in for a screen test—a tryout for television or the movies.

Bruce was a natural in front of the camera. He had a lot of experience acting when he was growing up in Hong Kong. He also had confidence, charm, and good looks. He did so well in his screen test that he got the part! He was no longer “just” a martial-arts star. He was going to be a TV star, too.



Bruce accomplished many other things during his lifetime. He was also a teacher and an author. Most of all, though, he became known around the world as an action-movie star. He used his martial-arts skills in the movies to fight the bad guys and save the day.



Then suddenly, Bruce was gone. Even before his most successful movie was shown in theaters, he died. He was only thirty-two years old.

That was in 1973. Bruce Lee is even more famous now than he was then. Other actors and actresses have portrayed martial artists in the movies. But no one ever did it with the strength, power, and speed that Bruce did.