

THE JMD MATRIX:

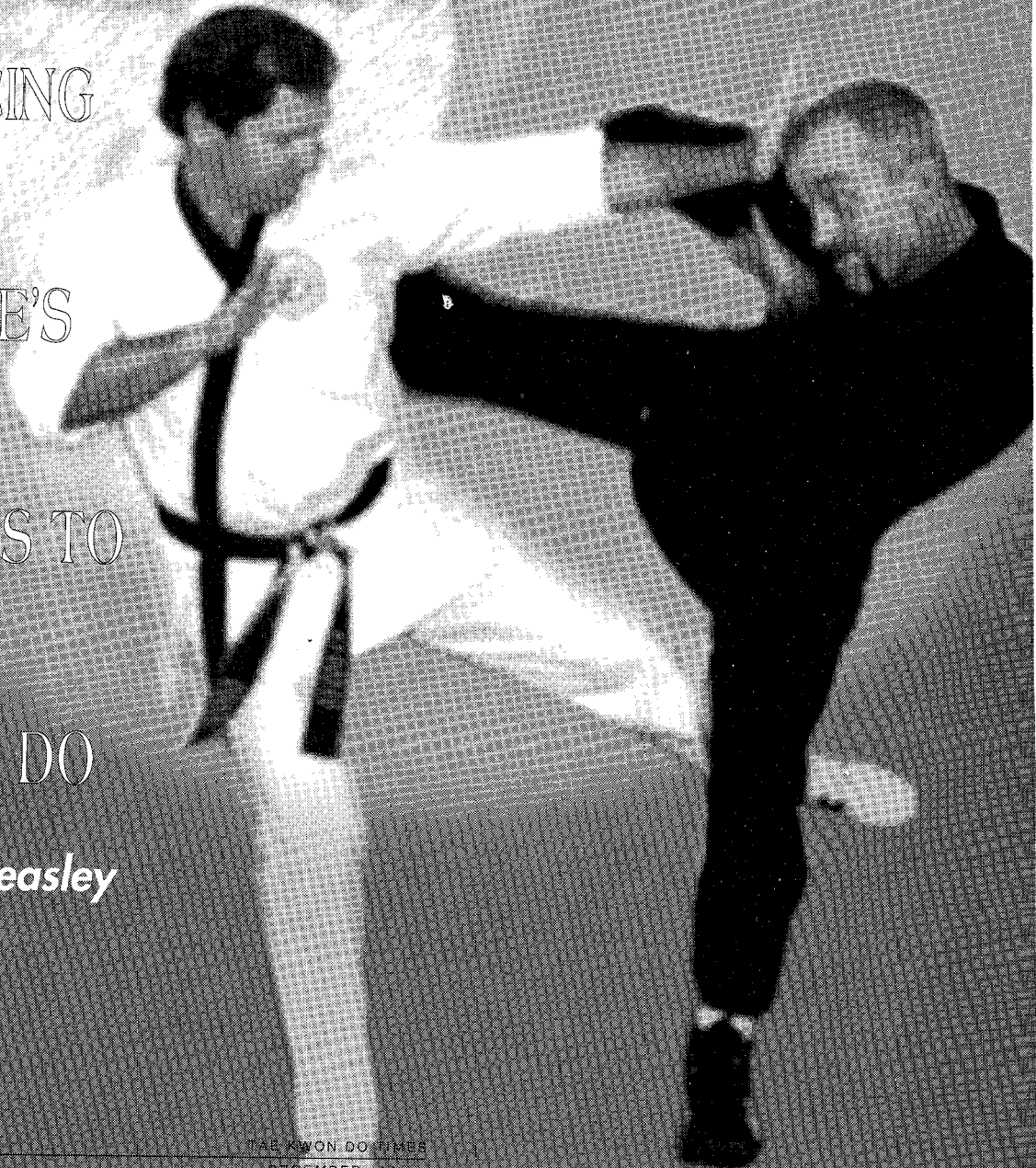
INTRODUCING

BRUCE LEE'S

PRINCIPLES TO

TAE KWON DO

By Dr. Jerry Beasley



“To make traditional Tae Kwon Do more effective as a self- defense art it must be supplemented with skills from other cultures.”

It is natural for Americans to pursue change. The freedom to initiate and accept change is an American tradition. As if in opposition to this freedom of expression, the traditional art of Tae Kwon Do was introduced to this country to share the rich culture of Korea and to provide a rare opportunity to engage in the art of self-defense. Yet over the years many masters have sought to change the art of Tae Kwon Do. Some would say to “Americanize” the art is to change forever the beauty of the tradition once handed down from generation to generation.

Today there is great disagreement over the credibility of traditional Tae Kwon Do. The Olympic sport form, some would say, teaches the student to be more aggressive and, therefore, more

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successful in self-defense. Here again, as the art changes, the message is revised. Discipline is the beauty of the traditional art, the Korean cultural heritage, and the group identity. We need not defend the value of traditional Tae Kwon Do. And we need not change it.

Traditional Tae Kwon Do accepts people of all races, cultural origins, and ideologies and unites them with one identity. When entering the dojang one abandons any outside position or accomplishments (or lack of accomplishments). In the traditional dojang, all are equal. Variations in status are displayed only by belt color. One can gain self-esteem, an understanding of and sensitivity for others, and a love for one’s country. These values we desper-

ately need in America today. Traditional Tae Kwon Do holds much worth as it stands without change.

However, as a fighting art, like all cultural arts, Tae Kwon Do has its limitations. Many of the stances, the blocking system, the hand-to-the-hip punching technique, and other practices- it can be argued- are at a noticeable disadvantage to other systems. As a result, some have attacked the merit of Tae Kwon Do. Some would take the traditional skills of the hip punch, for example, and attempt to manipulate them to resemble a boxer’s punch. At this point we have neither traditional Tae Kwon Do nor a valid boxing technique.

When attempting this type of change, we often see a stiff Tae Kwon Do stylist attempting to perform a poor imitation of a boxer’s punch or a Thai boxer’s round kick, etc. Once traditional skills are altered, it is similarly easy to change the traditional form. Instead of the traditional art, newer forms incorporating hybrid skills evolve. Finally, there is a restructuring of the chain of command. No longer are respect and loyalty a basic requirement. In essence, traditional Tae Kwon Do is lost.

THE JEET KUNE DO APPROACH

Objectively stated, Tae Kwon Do is a kicking art and is most effective at kicking range. However, in a self-defense situation, one must be prepared for punching, trapping and grappling at various ranges. To make traditional Tae Kwon Do more effective as a self-defense art it must be supplemented with skills from other cultures.

In today’s global economy it

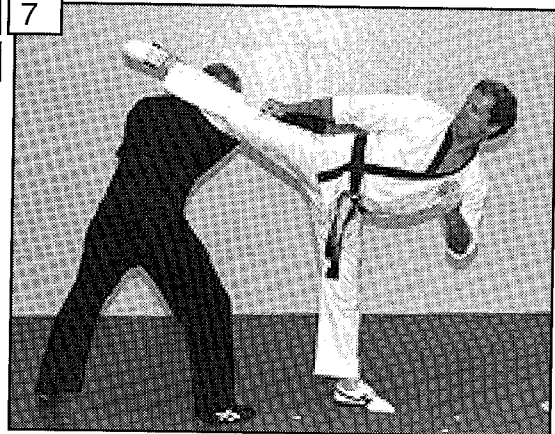
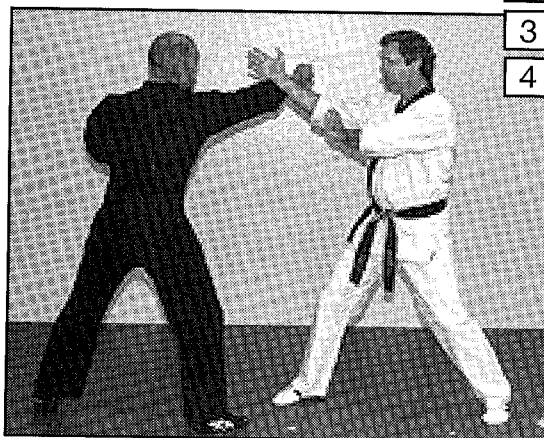
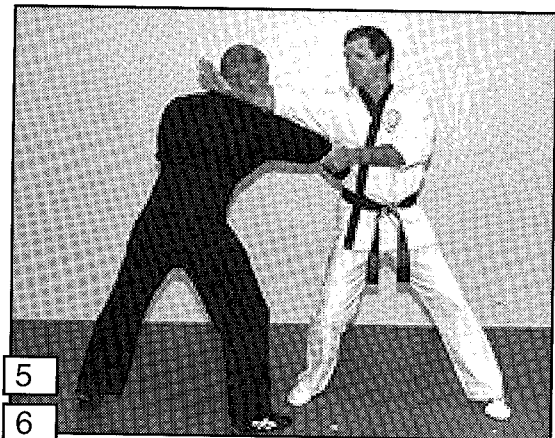
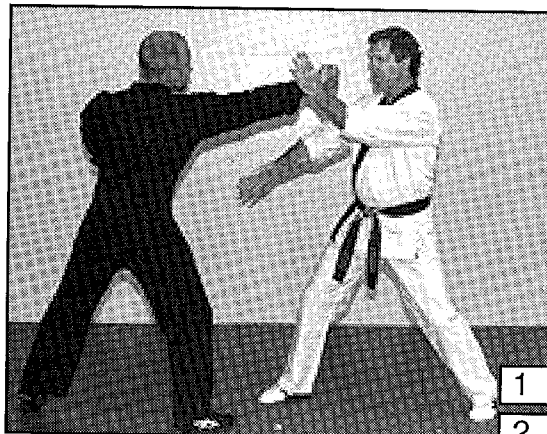
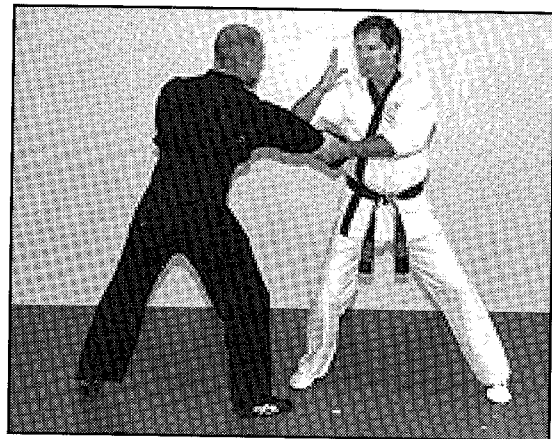
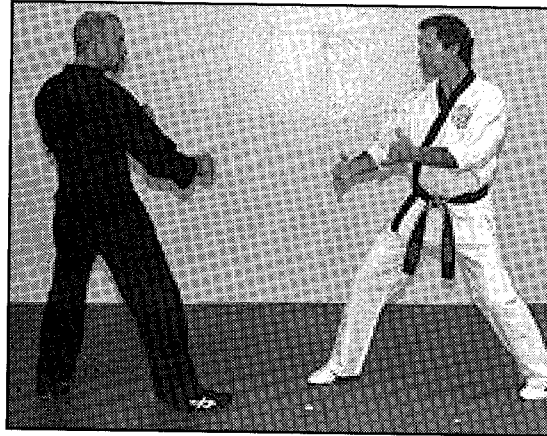
becomes perfectly natural to rely on other countries for goods and services. For instance, we might own a car from Korea and a television from Japan. We might choose to consume Italian food; watch English television broadcasts; or read a French newspaper. We do not lose our American identity simply because we enjoy the world as a supermarket. The same approach can be applied to martial arts.

In 1971 the legendary Bruce Lee, the world’s most recognizable martial artist, introduced his art of Jeet kune do by proclaiming that we should “liberate” ourselves “from classical karate”! Lee argued against the traditional arts, which he termed the “classical mess.” Quoting Mr. Lee from his famous

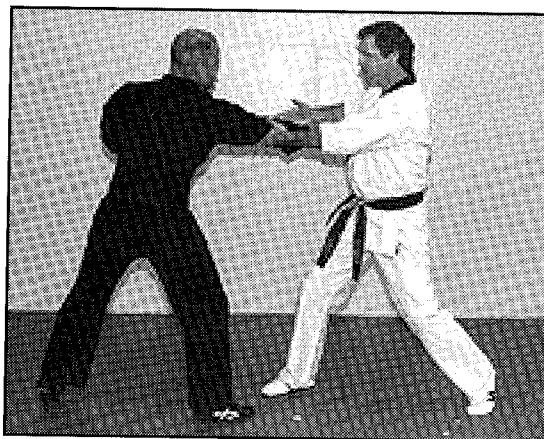
***“When two fighters
are standing toe to
toe in punching
range, their heads
bobbing, shoulders
turning, bodies
weaving, the boxers
know no equal.”***

book, the *Tao of Jeet Kune Do*, he states: “In the long history of martial arts, the instinct to follow and imitate seems to be inherent in most martial artists, instructors and students. Each man belongs to a style which claims to possess truth to the exclusion of other styles.”

The idea that “my style is the only style” is existent in traditional Tae Kwon Do. We need to be open to ideas from other countries. We must not, however, try to borrow techniques from other arts and then somehow try to make them fit into Tae Kwon Do. As in the boxer’s jab and cross, it simply does not fit into traditional Tae Kwon Do. The energy, rhythm,



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“How many Tae Kwon Do stylists would feel comfortable stepping onto the mat with a skilled judoka or wrestler? Tae Kwon Do is a standup art.”

stance, and positions—to be most effective—must represent boxing, not Tae Kwon Do. To box, we must become the boxer. Without gloves, boxing is also a martial art.

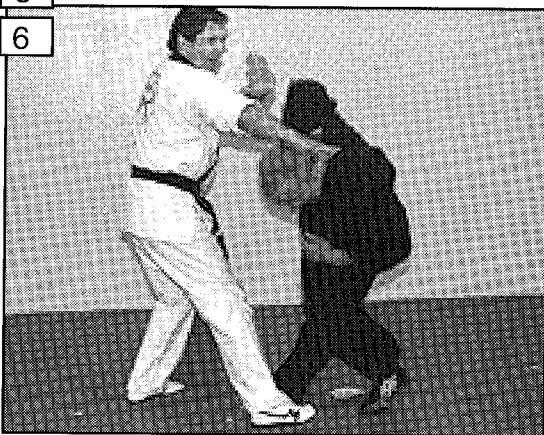
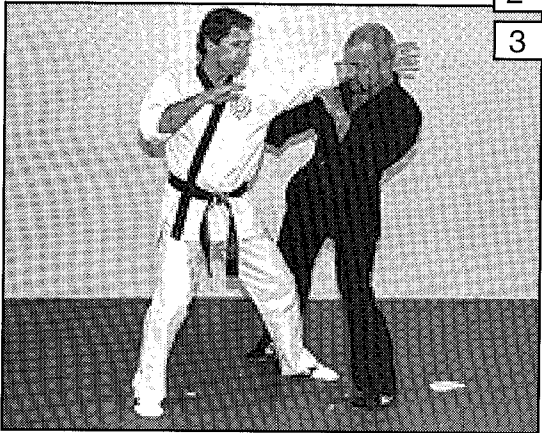
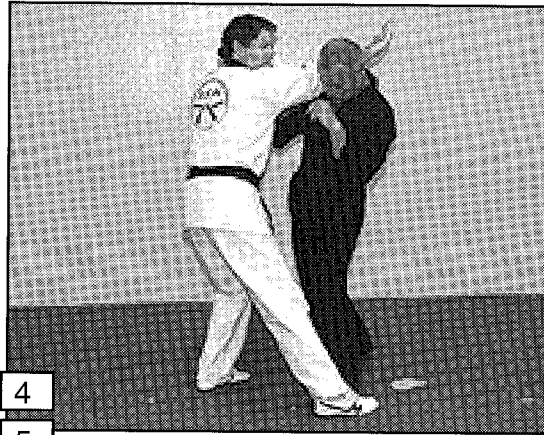
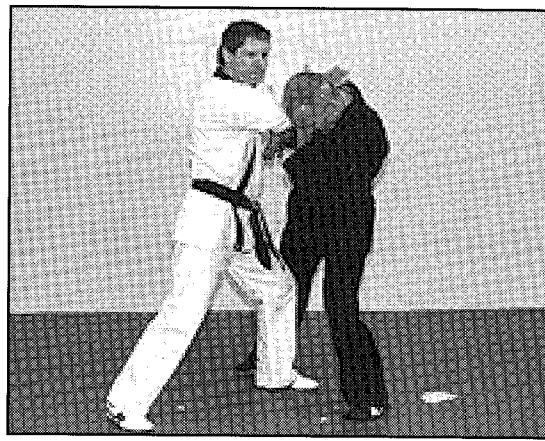
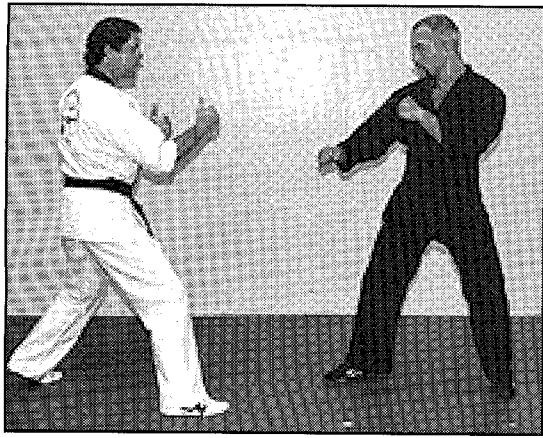
Lee felt that each martial art offered a partial truth regarding the meaning of combat. In kicking range Tae Kwon Do, Savate, and Muay Thai are considered most practical by those engaging in combat. At punching range boxing is the top choice. Professional boxers earn millions of dollars to fight. If there was a better way to punch, boxers could afford to learn it and

put it to use. When two fighters are standing toe to toe in punching range, their heads bobbing, shoulders turning, bodies

Dr. Beasley (right) assumes an on-guard position utilizing JKD principles to emphasize mobility. Against a backfist, Beasley “intercepts” (JKD means the way of the intercepting fist) by trapping the attacker’s weapon (2) and redirecting the punch away (3). Next (4), incorporating a principle of arm (weapon) destruction, Beasley captures the opponent’s arm and, with his own elbow, immobilizes the arm (5) to set up a neck strike (6) and hook kick (7). The concept of arm destruction is commonly found in Kali, while the trapping/redirection concepts are common to Karate and Wing Chun. Matrix JKD emphasizes that we are not bound by one art, but remain free to incorporate elements from any system to supplement Tae Kwon Do.

weaving, the boxers know no equal.

Lee tells us that, ultimately, the truth in combat must be experienced. If you study Tae Kwon Do, you must get into the ring with a boxer to discover the validity of the boxer’s skill. How many Tae Kwon



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Dr. Beasley intercepts the attacker by using a Thai-style leg kick (2) with a follow-up elbow smash (3 & 4) and an Indonesian-influenced takedown (5 & 6).

Do stylists would feel comfortable stepping onto the mat with a skilled judoka or wrestler? Tae Kwon Do is a standup art. It is best performed at long-range where the kicks have the greatest effect. Hence, it is natural that we should supplement the physical training with skills from other arts to cover all ranges.

In 1989 I developed a system for understanding principles of Jeet kune do and a way to most effectively supplement a traditional art. The method is called the JKD

matrix. The matrix introduced individuals to JKD by conceptualizing the idea of flowing from one art to another. Although this is not the intended result of JKD, it does present advantages to those formally schooled only in a single traditional art.

THE JKD MATRIX

There are four ranges of combat. Kicking is considered long-range, and is the distance covered by the extended leg. Punching range is often identified as being within an arm's length of the opponent. At punching range, some kicks cannot be performed. The hands become the principal tools for attack and

defense. Being even closer to the opponent constitutes trapping range. In this range every move counts. Elbows, knees, head butts, and stomps become the principal weapons. In trapping range a common goal is to immobilize the opponent's arms to set up counterattacks.

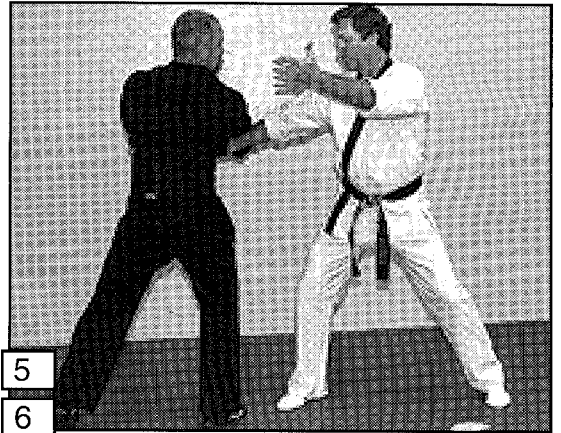
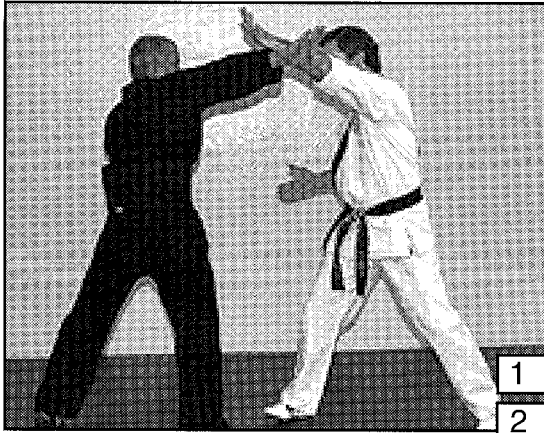
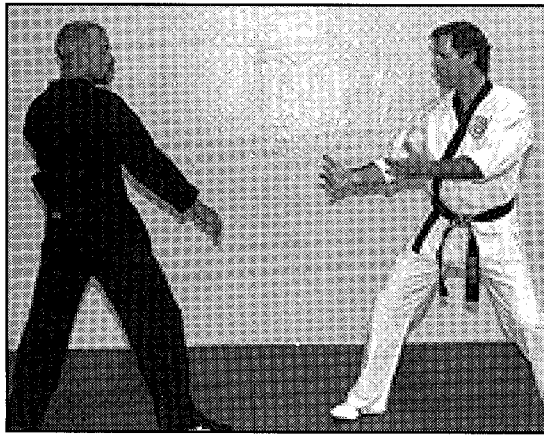
Traditionally, Tae

“Using the JKD principle, ‘absorb what is useful,’ remember that you are practicing a new art to supplement the ranges for Tae Kwon Do.”

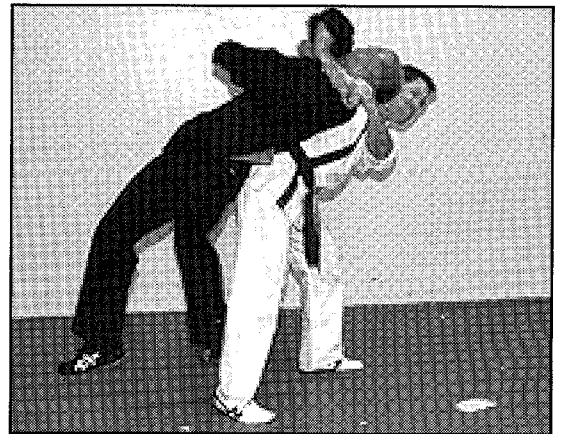
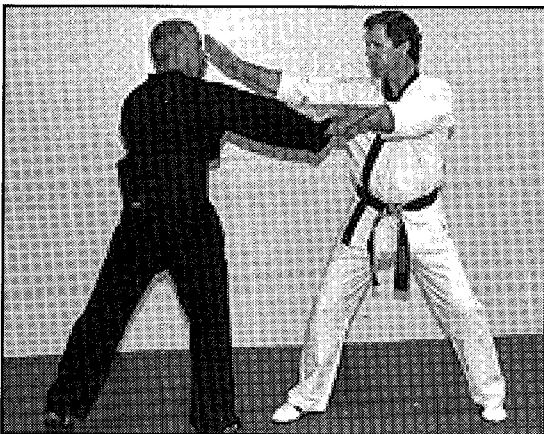
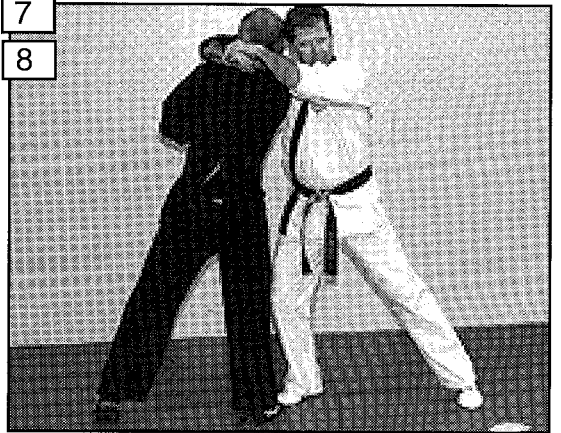
Kwon Do has not been concerned with trapping range. Most Tae Kwon Do practitioners feel comfortable at kicking range, but feel very much “closed in” when

standing close enough to feel the attacker's breath against the face. Even so, combat—street fighting—often occurs when the attacker gets “in your face,” and there is neither room to move nor time to think about moving. If you have practiced for years to become skilled at kicking will you be able to persevere if you have no opportunity to kick in a fight?

The closest range is grappling range. Grappling range involves chokes and locks and submission techniques. As has often been proven, many street fights go immediately to the ground. An enraged attacker seems more apt to grab his victim instead of standing at a distance presenting a tar-



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“Ultimately, maybe more than 75 percent of all combat exists outside kicking range where the Tae Kwon Do stylist is typically unprepared.”

get for the kick. Ultimately, maybe more than 75 percent of all combat exists outside kicking range where the Tae Kwon Do stylist is typically unprepared.

To develop your own JKD matrix, do the following: Across the top of a piece of paper list the four combat ranges (kicking, punching, trapping, grappling). To the far left of the page, list the various countries and arts in a vertical line. For example, under Korea list Tae Kwon Do, Tang soo do, Hapkido, etc. Under the Philippines list Kali, Escrima, and so on, until you have recog-

Using an open-hand block (2) to set up an eye strike (3 & 4), Beasley redirects the arm away (4 & 5) and finishes with a Jiu-jitsu-style lock and throw (7 & 8). Matrix JKD emphasizes maintaining a base art and supplementing the skills with principles from other cultures to insure that each fighting range is functional.

nized as many arts as you know.

Now, for each art make a decision. Is the art best applied in kicking, punching, trapping, or grappling range? For example, one might identify Tae Kwon Do, Karate, Savate, and Muay Thai at kicking range. Boxing is the favorite at punching range. At trapping range, Chinese Wing Chun and Filipino Kali are often identified as the best arts. Finally, in grappling range, the top arts include Japanese Judo or Jujitsu, American wrestling, and Indonesian Silat. Remember, your goal is not to gain rank in any of these other arts. Using the JKD matrix approach, you simply want to absorb or learn, what is useful to supplement your Tae Kwon Do.

To the far right of the page, at the end of each horizontal line stemming from each cultural art, write a number (1) for favorite (2) for acceptable level of skill, or (3) for least functional range. Your JKD matrix is complete when you can identify skill at punching, kicking, trapping, and grappling ranges. At kicking range use your Tae Kwon Do. By applying these JKD principles you should now seek to supplement your training to become more efficient in actual self-defense.

Seminars and summer camps present excellent opportunities to experience the top arts for punching, trapping and grappling ranges. Some videotapes are useful, but cannot replace an actual instructor. When you take part in a seminar you must "Empty your cup." Do not attend as a Tae Kwon Do stylist; enjoy the practice freely, without feeling the need to compare the new art to Tae Kwon Do.

Using the JKD principle, "absorb what is useful," remember that you are practicing a new art to supplement the ranges for Tae Kwon Do. It is not always useful to learn the katas or forms, or even the various cultural requirements. This cross-training method is now very common in most sports and arts. To become even more efficient in self-defense, we in traditional Tae Kwon Do need to employ the JKD matrix and engage fully in the practice of cross-training.

SUMMARY

Bruce Lee was adamant about escaping the confines of traditional

Dr. Beasley's JKD Matrix ©1989

<p style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">Multi-cultural Arts</p> <p style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">List arts under the following headings: Korean, Japanese, Filipino, Chinese, American, etc.</p>	<p style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">Range</p> <p style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">Is the art more functional at kicking(K), punching(P), trapping(T), or grappling(G) range?</p>
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Personal Preference

"My truth is not your truth." Place 1, 2, or 3 beside each entry, with 1 being a major preference.

Examples:

1 = I prefer to be in this range.

2 = Not preferred, but I do know how to use this range.

3 = I need to supplement this art more.

4 = Unprepared range.

		(K)	(P)	(T)	(G)	
Japanese	<i>Karate</i>	K				1
	<i>Jujitsu</i>				G	2
	<i>Aikido</i>				G	3
Korean	<i>Tae Kwon Do</i>	K				1
	<i>Hapkido</i>	K				2
Filipino	<i>Kali</i>			T		2
	<i>Escrima</i>			T		2
Chinese	<i>Wing Chun</i>			T		3
American	<i>Boxing</i>		P	T		1
	<i>Wrestling</i>				G	2
Thai	<i>Muay Thai</i>	K		T		3

NOTE: This is Dr. Beasley's personal matrix based on the arts he has studied. To give a preference of 1 means that this is your primary art. List only the arts you have practiced (rank is not required). If you have a 4 at any range you should seriously try to improve your score.

arts. He termed his method for self-expression Jeet kune do. In this article I have not discussed the complicated theories of Jeet kune do to understand truth in combat "using no way as way." Rather, I have simply introduced the reader to a JKD principle that aids in the understanding of some basic combat tenets. There is more to JKD than simply completing a matrix. However, for the traditional stylist, this alone will help to insure potential victory in the combat arena.

Traditional Tae Kwon Do involves considerably more than the concept of self-defense. Discipline, courage, physical fitness, indomitable spirit, and empathy for others are but a few of the benefits of Tae Kwon Do training. We should value our traditional Tae Kwon Do and not feel

obligated to change. We can and should supplement it strategically by employing principles of Jeet kune do. If self-defense is the goal, it behooves the prudent student of Tae Kwon Do to investigate the JKD matrix and supplement the art without changing its virtues.

About the Author: Dr. Jerry Beasley, seventh dan, is a professor of physical education at Radford university (Radford, VA), where he heads the multi-cultural martial arts option. A career martial artist, Beasley is founder of the AIKIA/World Martial Arts Group, an association that promotes innovation and freedom of expression in traditional Tae Kwon Do. As a certified instructor of Jeet kune do, he has written two books (Paladin Press) and more than 50 articles on the subject. He is the JKD columnist for Karate International magazine. For more information write: AIKIA, P.O. Box 402, Christiansburg, VA 24073