***1*** Chinese Wushu (popularly referred to as Gongfu) includes a series of fighting styles which has developed over a long historical period in China. Nowadays, it is regarded as a traditional sport and a symbol for Chinese culture, gaining more and more attention. Styles including Shaolin, Tai Chi and Qigong have many followers worldwide. Some westerners think that all Chinese people are Kung Fu masters. That’s not true, but this tradition has its unique existence in modern times and exerts much influence on the locals’ lifestyle. Although being fighting styles, Chinese Wushu advocates virtue and peace, not violence or aggression. This value has been upheld by people from generation to generation. With a number of movement sets, boxing styles, weapon skills and some fighting stunts, Wushu keeps its original function of self-defense. Now its value in body-building and fitness is also highly appreciated.

**History**

***2*** In order to survive in an extremely hostile environment, our primitive ancestors developed primary means of defense and attack that included leaping, tumbling and kicking. Although they knew how to fight with rudimentary weapons made from stones and wood, fighting with bare hands and fists became essential skills. The Martial Arts we recognize today as Wushu had their origins in the Shang and Zhou dynasties (1600 BC—256 BC). During the following Qin (221 BC—207 BC) and Han (202 BC—220 AD) dynasties, wrestling, swordplay and spear skills became well developed and were popular among civilians and troops. In the Song Dynasty (960—1279), various schools, boxing styles, movement sets and weapon skills flourished.

**Classification**

***3*** Over the centuries of development in China, Wushu has become a large system containing various schools or sects. It is recorded that there are over 300 distinct types of boxing existing around the country. The styles in northern and southern China are quite different. Therefore it is hard to classify

these types.

***4*** Some of the schools are classified by geographical locations. For example, the Southern Fist (Nanquan) prevails in South China, and Shaolin School is based at Shaolin Temple in Henan Province. Some are named after the creator or master, like the Chen-style Tai Chi and Yang-style Tai Chi. Some are identified by different training methods, such as the Internal Boxing Arts (Neijiaquan) that concentrates on the manipulation of the inner breath and circulation of the body, and the External Boxing Arts (Waijiaquan) concentrating on improving the muscles and the limbs.

***5*** The most outstanding and influential schools are listed as follows:

·Shaolin Martial Arts: Originated in the Shaolin Temple in Henan Province, Shaolin Martial Arts is considered the premier style in China and is widely spread all over the world. Both of its physical exercise and mental training are based upon Buddhist philosophy. The Shaolin Boxing, Southern Fist, Northern Legs (Beitui) and Wing Chun are the representatives of this school.

·Wudang Martial Arts: This sect has almost the same fame as the Shaolin. Based at the Mt. Wudang in Hubei Province, it is developed under the guidance of Taoist theories. Tai Chi Chuan, Form/Intention Boxing, Eight-Diagram Palm are essentials of Wudang.

·Emei Martial Arts: Taking Mt. Emei in Sichuan Province as its camp, this sect blends the merits

of Shaolin and Wudang. Many sub-branches derive from this sect, including Qingcheng, Tiefo, Qingniu, Dianyi, Huangling, etc.

**Kung Fu master: Bruce Lee and Jeet Kune Do**

***6*** Bruce Lee (1940—1973), named Lee Jun-fan in Chinese, is a world famous Kung Fu master, a martial arts film actor and the founder of Jeet Kune Do. He was born in China Town, San Francisco, but grew up in Kowloon, Hong Kong. In 1959, he went to the US and was admitted to the University of Washington in 1961.

Lee made great contributions to introducing Chinese martial arts to the world. Because of his superb skills, he is called “King of Kung Fu” by Americans, “Sage of Martial Arts” by Japanese and “Master of Fighting” by Thais. Many great Chinese Kung Fu film shows of Bruce Lee were produced and to date, Bruce Lee still has a great number of followers.

***7*** Due to his poor health during his childhood, Lee was sent to a master at the age of 7 to practise Tai Chi, which was good for fitness. By age 13, he also learned Wing Chun from Ye Wen, a brilliant Wing Chun master. Later he learned Praying Mantis, Hung Kuen, Shaolin Boxing, Tam Tuei, and White Crane Boxing. He also explored Qigong and Yinggong, all of which laid solid foundation for his eventual creation of Jeet Kune Do. Besides Chinese boxing skills, he studied western fists skills and learned the boxing methods, steps and motions from some masters. Bruce was good at playing Long Staff, Short Staff, Nunchakus and many other weapons. He organized a Chinese martial arts team in his university to practice and perform in extracurricular time.

***8*** He took a break during his sophomore year at the university to establish the Jun-fan Martial Arts Club. The club became well-known ever since news spread about his saving a girl in Chinatown, Florida, by defeating four gangsters with bare hands. Very soon, branches of his club were established in Seattle, Auckland, Los Angeles, amongst others. He became well-known in America. An increasing number of learners or boxing stars, including Karate star Chuck Norris and King of Boxing Muhammad Ali, came to him. It was through this way that he spread Chinese Kung Fu by teaching and exchanging experiences.