

# Who Was Bruce Lee

Bruce Lee

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Bruce Lee (born Lee Jun-fan; November 27, 1940 – July 20, 1973) was a Hong Kong-American martial artist, actor, filmmaker, and philosopher. He was the founder of Jeet Kune Do, a hybrid martial arts philosophy which was formed from Lee's experiences in unarmed fighting and self-defense—as well as eclectic, Zen Buddhist and Taoist philosophies—as a new school of martial arts thought. With a film career spanning Hong Kong and the United States, Lee is regarded as the first global Chinese film star and one of the most influential martial artists in the history of cinema. Known for his roles in five feature-length martial arts films, Lee is credited with helping to popularize martial arts films in the 1970s and promoting Hong Kong action cinema.

Born in San Francisco and raised in British Hong Kong, Lee was introduced to the Hong Kong film industry as a child actor by his father Lee Hoi-chuen. His early martial arts experience included Wing Chun (trained under Ip Man), tai chi, boxing (winning a Hong Kong boxing tournament), and frequent street fighting (neighborhood and rooftop fights). In 1959, Lee moved to Seattle, where he enrolled at the University of Washington in 1961. It was during this time in the United States that he began considering making money by teaching martial arts, even though he aspired to have a career in acting. He opened his first martial arts school, operated out of his home in Seattle. After later adding a second school in Oakland, California, he once drew significant attention at the 1964 Long Beach International Karate Championships of California by making demonstrations and speaking. He subsequently moved to Los Angeles to teach, where his students included Chuck Norris, Sharon Tate, and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar.

His roles in America, including playing Kato in *The Green Hornet*, introduced him to American audiences. After returning to Hong Kong in 1971, Lee landed his first leading role in *The Big Boss*, directed by Lo Wei. A year later he starred in *Fist of Fury*, in which he portrayed Chen Zhen, and *The Way of the Dragon*, directed and written by Lee. He went on to star in the US-Hong Kong co-production *Enter the Dragon* (1973) and *The Game of Death* (1978). His Hong Kong and Hollywood-produced films, all of which were commercially successful, elevated Hong Kong martial arts films to a new level of popularity and acclaim, sparking a surge of Western interest in Chinese martial arts. The direction and tone of his films, including their fight choreography and diversification, dramatically influenced and changed martial arts and martial arts films worldwide. With his influence, kung fu films began to displace the wuxia film genre—fights were choreographed more realistically, fantasy elements were discarded for real-world conflicts, and the characterisation of the male lead went from simply being a chivalrous hero to one that embodied the notion of masculinity.

Lee's career was cut short by his sudden death at age 32 from a brain edema, the causes of which remain a matter of dispute. Nevertheless, his films remained popular, gained a large cult following, and became widely imitated and exploited. He became an iconic figure known throughout the world, particularly among the Chinese, based upon his portrayal of Cantonese culture in his films, and among Asian Americans for defying Asian stereotypes in the United States. Since his death, Lee has continued to be a prominent influence on modern combat sports, including judo, karate, mixed martial arts, and boxing, as well as modern popular culture, including film, television, comics, animation, and video games. *Time* named Lee one of the 100 most important people of the 20th century.

Linda Lee Cadwell

*Claire Emery Lee Cadwell (née Emery; born March 21, 1945) is a retired American teacher and writer, the widow of martial artist and actor Bruce Lee (1940–1973)*

Linda Claire Emery Lee Cadwell (née Emery; born March 21, 1945) is a retired American teacher and writer, the widow of martial artist and actor Bruce Lee (1940–1973), and the mother of actor Brandon Lee (1965–1993) and actress Shannon Lee (born 1969). She is the author of the Bruce Lee biography *Bruce Lee: The Man Only I Knew*, upon which the film *Dragon: The Bruce Lee Story* (1993) is based, as well as the founder, a former trustee of, and an unpaid advisor of the Bruce Lee Foundation.

## Bruce Lee filmography

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This article details the filmography of Hong Kong-American actor and martial artist Bruce Lee.

Several of Lee's films premiered after his death, including *Enter the Dragon*, *Game of Death* and *Circle of Iron*.

## Dragon: The Bruce Lee Story

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*Dragon: The Bruce Lee Story* is a 1993 American biographical drama film directed by Rob Cohen. The film stars Jason Scott Lee, with a supporting cast including Lauren Holly, Nancy Kwan, and Robert Wagner. The film follows the life of actor and martial artist Bruce Lee (Jason) from his relocation to the United States from Hong Kong to his career as a martial arts teacher, and then as a television and film actor. It also focuses on the relationship between Bruce and his wife Linda, and the racism to which Bruce was subjected.

The primary source of the screenplay is Cadwell's 1975 biography *Bruce Lee: The Man Only I Knew*. Other sources include Robert Clouse's book *Bruce Lee: The Biography* and research by Cohen, including interviews with Cadwell and Bruce's son, Brandon Lee. Rather than a traditional biographical film, Cohen decided to include elements of mysticism and to dramatise fight scenes to give it the same tone as the films in which Bruce starred. *Dragon* was filmed primarily in Hong Kong, Los Angeles and San Francisco.

*Dragon: The Bruce Lee Story* received generally positive reviews, with critics finding it entertaining despite criticisms of its veneration of Bruce. Jason was widely praised for his performance. The film was a commercial success and its revenue exceeded box office averages for biographical films, which was attributed to its romantic themes and its appeal to people outside the traditional kung fu film audience. A video game adaptation of the same name was released the following year. *Dragon* is dedicated to Brandon, who died several weeks before its release.

## Bruce Lee Library

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The Bruce Lee Library is composed of books written by or about Bruce Lee (1940–1973), famous Hongkongese and American martial artist, philosopher, author, instructor of martial arts, actor, filmmaker and screenwriter.

## Bruceploitation

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Bruceploitation (a portmanteau of "Bruce Lee" and "exploitation") is an exploitation film subgenre that emerged after the death of martial arts film star Bruce Lee in 1973, during which time filmmakers from Hong Kong, Taiwan and South Korea cast Bruce Lee look-alike actors ("Lee-alikes") to star in imitation martial arts films, in order to exploit Lee's sudden international popularity. Bruce Lee look-alike characters also commonly appear in other media, including anime, comic books, manga, and video games.

Shannon Lee

*Bruce Lee and retired martial arts teacher Linda Lee Cadwell, and is the younger sister and the only sibling of actor Brandon Lee. Through Bruce Lee,*

Shannon Emery Lee Keasler (born April 19, 1969) is an American actress, businesswoman, singer, and martial artist. She is the only living child of actor and martial artist Bruce Lee and retired martial arts teacher Linda Lee Cadwell, and is the younger sister and the only sibling of actor Brandon Lee. Through Bruce Lee, she is a granddaughter of Cantonese opera singer and film actor Lee Hoi-chuen.

Jason Scott Lee

*of The Jungle Book and Bruce Lee in the 1993 martial arts film Dragon: The Bruce Lee Story. Lee was born in Los Angeles. He was raised in Hawaii and is*

Jason Scott Lee (Chinese: 李國豪; pinyin: Lǐ Guóháo; born November 19, 1966) is an American actor and martial artist. He played Mowgli in Disney's 1994 live-action adaptation of The Jungle Book and Bruce Lee in the 1993 martial arts film Dragon: The Bruce Lee Story.

Brandon Lee

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Brandon Bruce Lee (February 1, 1965 – March 31, 1993) was an American actor and martial artist. Establishing himself as a rising action star in the early 1990s, Lee landed what was to be his breakthrough role as Eric Draven in the supernatural superhero film The Crow (1994). However, Lee's career and life were cut short by his accidental death during the film's production.

Lee was the son of martial artist and film star Bruce Lee, who died when Brandon was eight years old. Lee, who followed in his father's footsteps, trained in martial arts, including Jeet Kune Do, Wing Chun, Eskrima, Silat, and Muay Thai, and studied acting at Emerson College and the Lee Strasberg Theatre and Film Institute. Lee started his career with leading roles in the Hong Kong action film Legacy of Rage (1986), and the straight-to-video Laser Mission (1989), which was a financial success on home video. Lee also appeared in two spin-offs of the 1970s series Kung Fu, the television film Kung Fu: The Movie (1986) and the pilot Kung Fu: The Next Generation (1987).

Transitioning to Hollywood productions, Lee first starred in the Warner Bros buddy cop film Showdown in Little Tokyo (1991), co-starring Dolph Lundgren. While it did not do well with audiences and critics upon its release, it later became a cult film. This was followed by a leading role in Rapid Fire (1992), produced by 20th Century Fox. Lee, alongside Jeff Imada, is also credited for the fight choreography, which contained elements of Jeet Kune Do. Though the film was not well-received, critics praised Lee's onscreen presence.

After being cast to headline The Crow, Lee had filmed nearly all of his scenes when he was fatally wounded on set by a prop gun. Lee posthumously received praise for his performance, while the film became a critical

and commercial success. His career has drawn parallels with his father's, both men having died young prior to the release of their breakthrough films.

## The Legend of Bruce Lee

*Legend of Bruce Lee (Chinese: 李小龍傳) is a 2008 Chinese biographical television series based on the life story of martial artist and actor Bruce Lee. The 50-episode*

The Legend of Bruce Lee (Chinese: 李小龍傳) is a 2008 Chinese biographical television series based on the life story of martial artist and actor Bruce Lee. The 50-episode series was produced and broadcast by CCTV and began airing on October 12, 2008. It was intended to promote Chinese culture alongside the 2008 Beijing Summer Olympics.

It stars Hong Kong actor Danny Chan as Bruce Lee and American actress Michelle Lang as Lee's wife, Linda Lee Cadwell. The production period spanned nine months, with filming taking place in China, Hong Kong, Macau, the United States, Italy, and Thailand, and with a budget of 50 million yuan (US\$7.3 million).

Lee's daughter, Shannon Lee, is credited as executive producer of the series. Other martial artists such as Mark Dacascos, Ray Park, Gary Daniels, Ernest Miller, and Michael Jai White are also featured in the series, playing the roles of martial artists prominent throughout Bruce Lee's life and career.

The Legend of Bruce Lee has seen increasing viewership since its debut in 2008. The first 14 episodes broke China's former record held by Chuang Guan Dong. According to the CSM survey held on 26 October 2008, the first 30 episodes of the series received viewership ratings above 10.35%. The finale episode attained a viewership rating of 14.87%, breaking CCTV's all-time high record set in 2003.

The Legend of Bruce Lee has been watched by over 400 million viewers in China, making it the most-watched Chinese television drama series of all time, as of 2017.

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