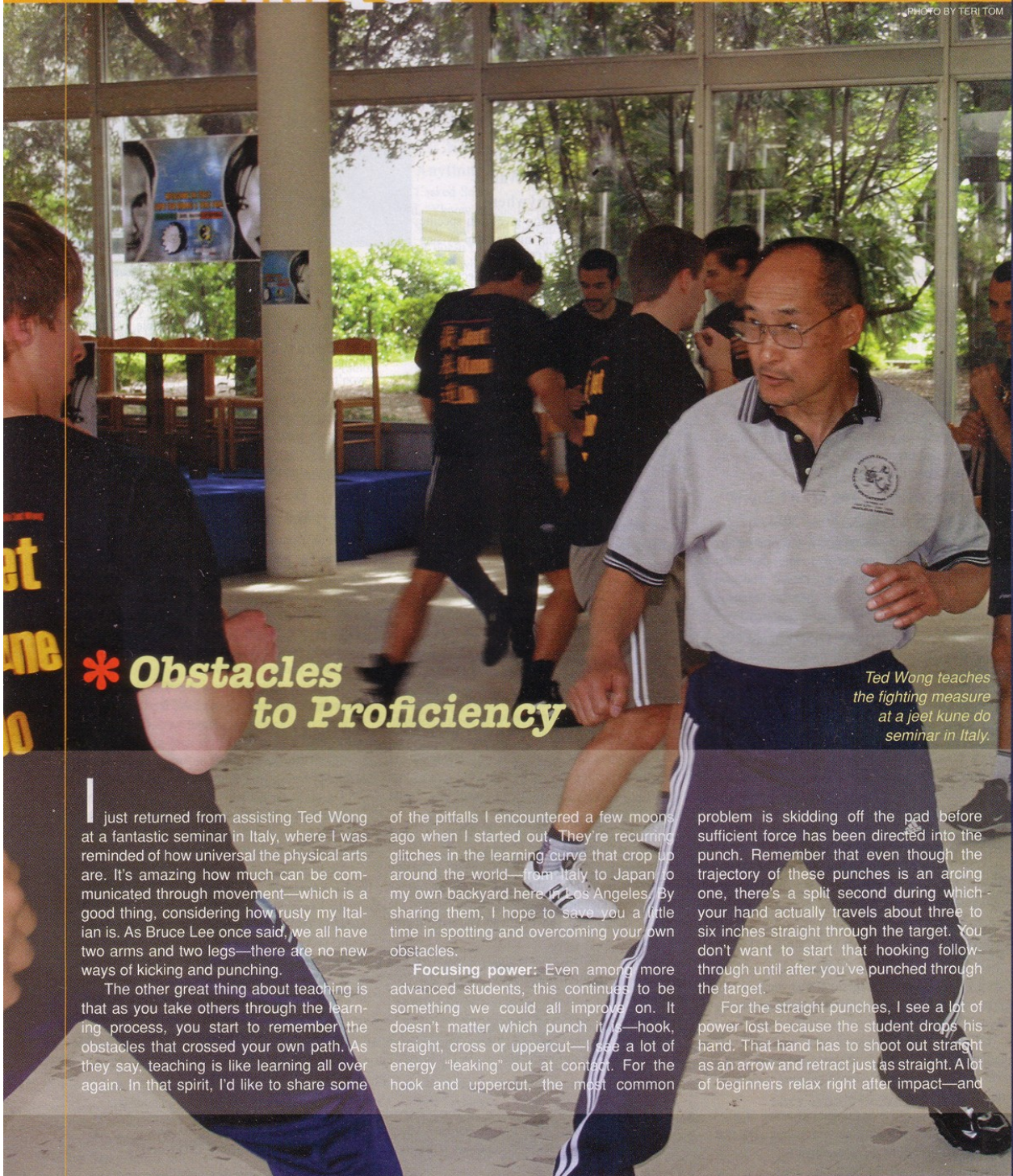


[by Teri Tom, M.S., R.D.]

PHOTO BY TERI TOM



## \* Obstacles to Proficiency

*Ted Wong teaches the fighting measure at a jeet kune do seminar in Italy.*

I just returned from assisting Ted Wong at a fantastic seminar in Italy, where I was reminded of how universal the physical arts are. It's amazing how much can be communicated through movement—which is a good thing, considering how rusty my Italian is. As Bruce Lee once said, we all have two arms and two legs—there are no new ways of kicking and punching.

The other great thing about teaching is that as you take others through the learning process, you start to remember the obstacles that crossed your own path. As they say, teaching is like learning all over again. In that spirit, I'd like to share some

of the pitfalls I encountered a few moons ago when I started out. They're recurring glitches in the learning curve that crop up around the world—from Italy to Japan to my own backyard here in Los Angeles. By sharing them, I hope to save you a little time in spotting and overcoming your own obstacles.

**Focusing power:** Even among more advanced students, this continues to be something we could all improve on. It doesn't matter which punch it is—hook, straight, cross or uppercut—I see a lot of energy "leaking" out at contact. For the hook and uppercut, the most common

problem is skidding off the pad before sufficient force has been directed into the punch. Remember that even though the trajectory of these punches is an arcing one, there's a split second during which your hand actually travels about three to six inches straight through the target. You don't want to start that hooking follow-through until after you've punched through the target.

For the straight punches, I see a lot of power lost because the student drops his hand. That hand has to shoot out straight as an arrow and retract just as straight. A lot of beginners relax right after impact—and