



Episode 337 – Ip Man | [whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com](http://whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com)



**Jeremy Lesniak:**

Hello thanks for coming by. Welcome whistlekick martial arts radio, that's what this is. This is also episode 337 and this is the episode we talk about Ip Man. I'm Jeremy Lesniak, I'm your host for the show, I'm the founder whistlekick and I love traditional martial arts, so I made my job, my life, my passion, and everything I do with whistlekick, this wonderful team, is to expand traditional martial arts to give you whatever you need to make traditional martial arts get bigger, more important, more substantial part of your life. Check out the show notes with transcripts, photos, videos, and so much more at [whistlekickmartialartsradio.com](http://whistlekickmartialartsradio.com). Find links to everything we do on the web including our products, other websites, so much at [whistlekick.com](http://whistlekick.com). You can find us in social media we are @whistlekick and you can email me if you wanted, [Jeremy@whistlekick.com](mailto:Jeremy@whistlekick.com). We are always looking for great suggestions for guests.

Let's dig in let's talk about Ip Man. You might've heard the movie series Ip Man starred the Hong Kong actor/American actor Donnie Yen. It's a martial arts movie depicting the life of Ip Man through the storyline which is based in reality but is not completely factual. It's been altered a bit for the sake of entertainment, how Ip Man or Yip man was a Chinese martial arts master of Wing Chun kung fu. The most popular student had was of course Bruce Lee. Ip Man was born on October 1, 1893 in Foshan Guangdong in China to a wealthy family. His father was Yip Oi-door and his mother was Wu Shui. Ip was the third child to the eldest Yip Kai Gak, Yip Wan May and he had a younger brother Yip Wan Hum. All the children received it traditional Chinese education. Ip witnessed the turmoil in China at an early age.



## Episode 337 – Ip Man | [whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com](http://whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com)

When he was two years old the Qing Dynasty began to collapse. China unpredictably lost the first Sino-Japanese war which cause great humiliation to China. Just two years later, the Emperor was seized by Empress Dowager during a coup, these incidents led to the formation of the righteous and harmonious fists or "boxers" who declared themselves a supporting force for the government. But directions only worsen the situation, China was compelled to declare war on Europe, Japan, and Russia and China lost shortly after. After the uprising many of these boxers were executed which understandably made the kung fu masters keep a low profile in the meantime. When he was seven, Ip saw foreign armies invade northern China. Ip saw an opportunity to study Wing Chun when he was just 12. A Wing Chin master named Chan Wah Shun moved into the Ip clan family Hall to teach martial arts. At that time the government was still unstable but the people were slowly getting back to their normal lives. Ip like to watch Chan's classes together with his peers until one day when he finally got the courage and he asked Chan to teach him kung fu. Chan refused initially and he told Ip the people who came from wealthy families made poor students of Wing Chun. But since Chan was teaching on the property of Ip's family he couldn't just refuse its request. He said he would accept it but under a condition, he required Ip to first pay a whopping 500 tai yung or silver dollars. Now at that time that about could buy you several houses which of course would be impossible for any child to raise. Clearly, Chan was discouraging it from becoming a student. Now after some time Ip returned to chin with the money that he'd asked for. Chan couldn't believe his eyes and he thought that Ip stole the money from somebody else. So he brought Ip to his father immediately and Ip's father told Chan that he and his wife gave the money to Ip so that Chan would accept him as a student. From then on Ip became an official student of Chan along with 15 other people. Chan was already 64 and three years later Chan passed away. Aside from Chan, Ip also learned from Wu Chung Sok, Chan's second eldest student. In fact he learned most of his skills and techniques for Wu and not Chan because Chan was already old and frail at the time. Chan saw its potential and he asked Wu to continue teaching Ip after his inevitable death. Ip moved to Hong Kong in 1908 with his relatives assistance, Lung Fu Ting, to study at a prestigious school called the St. Steven's College. Hong Kong was under British rule back then and the government employed Indian and Pakistani police officers. Generally, these police officers were not respectful to the Chinese and the often-showed cruelty to there is one time in particular when Ip had an encounter with one of them. He was with his classmate there were walking towards school when I saw an Indian police officer beating a Chinese lady. Normally he'd try to avoid getting involved in these situations but for some reason this time she was compelled to engage to help his fellow citizen. Ip and his classmate went to the scene and defended the lady verbally. The police officer accused a Chinese lady of theft but Ip in his classmate told him that he has the right to beat someone even if the accusation was true. The police officer became angry and attempted to hit Ip. Ip of course being adept in kung fu, countered simply but left the police officer with the bloody face. Afterwards, the two ran away towards the school immediately. Ip's classmate told an old man whose from Foshan about the incident that happened about the move that it executed against the police officer. The old man asked him to show the move and after that, he told the young man to ask Ip to stop by. Ip and his classmate went to the old man the next day and when they arrived the old man asked if what to the kung fu he had studied in Foshan. Full of pride, Ip told the old man that he had



## Episode 337 – Ip Man | [whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com](http://whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com)

studied the best type of kung fu and it was too much for the old man to understand. The old man persuaded up a little bit more so Ip finally told him that he studied Wing Chun. The old man told him that he'd heard of it and there was a man named Chow Wah Shun who taught there. Then he asked Ip to demonstrate the [00:06:39.06] form Ip complied but the response he got from the old man was not too great. Ip was humiliated but he didn't say anything out of respect for the old man. He asked Ip to devastate another form the Chun Ku, Ip complied again but the old man just shook his head and said not very good. Now this comment made Ip very upset, the old man asked him again to devastate another form the Bu Gi. This time Ip didn't know how to do the form, so he just told old man that he didn't want to show him. The old man stop asking him to show many more forms but to have Chi Sau or sticky hands with him. Ip agreed right away because he thought he'd be able to show his true skill that way. Ip started by throwing a punch, the old man just blocked it through to the side. Ip got up again to land another punch but same thing happened. Ip was totally humiliated and stormed out. Apparently, after that incident Ip didn't want to see the old man again. However his classmate told him that the old man wanted to visit once more, Ip refused and his classmate relayed Ip's response to the old man. The old man told Ip's classmate to tell Ip his identity that his name was Leung Bik. Upon hearing this immediately changed his mind and rushed to the old man even before class had ended. He was excited because Leung Bik was the youngest son of Chan Wah Shu's teacher Leung Chan. Leung Bik struggled financially so Ip invited him to move in giving Ip a good opportunity to learn Wing Chung. Leung taught him until his death in 1912. These four years of constant training allowed ip to learn the entire system of wing chun and after four more years when he was 24 Ip returned to Foshan to share his newly learned knowledge and wing chun with his kung fu brothers.

Ip started to make a living as a policeman in Foshan. He had subordinates who learn Wing Chun from him and he also taught several other people including his friends and relatives but this was all very informal, he didn't establish his own school at that point. Around that time, Foshan was visited by a kung fu master from northern China, this was 1918 or so, and he introduced himself as a praying mantis instructor and went to the Jeun Mo wi, the martial arts sports Association of Foshan. He watched the kung fu practitioners during their training and he remark that no one among those practitioners were capable of being a true kung fu master because they did not know the proper kung fu techniques. Afterwards he challenged all the Masters in Foshan to have a duel with him. When the town heard about this they didn't know who they should choose to represent them because the best kung fu practitioners were pretty old and the young ones didn't have enough expertise. So they consulted an herbal doctor for some reason that I don't have any evidence of named Lee Kong hoy, whether he knew someone who could equal the praying mantis master. Now Lee was one of Ip's friends so he asked Ip he could be the representative in the duel. Ip agreed without second thought because according to him he was learning kung fu not only to defend others but also to fight. The town then arrange the date and placed the event. Ip visited the venue every night and when he learned this the challenger also went to the venue the night before the event. He bragged it that he could throw him with one hand using only the Phoenix fist in front of Ip he demonstrated this technique by punching a wall made from rock and



## Episode 337 – Ip Man | [whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com](http://whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com)

mortar, the power of his punch left a hole in the wall. Ip didn't flinch but only smiled as the challenger left the room. On the day of the event about 2000 people came to watch, the entire theater venue wasn't enough to hold the whole audience so some of them had to watch from outside. Those who were inside took their seats small tables were set up between the chairs were hot tea was served and before the fight began the referee tossed a coin to determine where on the stage the fighter should start. The toss favored it and he chose to stand with his back to the audience and the fight began. The Challenger initiator strike and as Ip expected it was the Phoenix fist. Ip countered the attack with a grab and pulling technique. The Challenger flew off the stage and crashed onto one of the tea tables. It was a very bad fall and he broke three ribs. Apparently, fight was over, just one move. And this disappointing most of the people because they came to see an entertaining fight but it was over in just a few seconds. The organizer worried about this so we asked Ip to demonstrate how he defeated the challenger. Ip demonstrated the hand forms while the organizer arranged other entertainment such as Lion dances. The audience was ultimately satisfied and led to a huge party through the night as they celebrated their victory this event made it famous all over Foshan.

Ip had taught several students and Foshan among them however only Kwok Fu and Loon Ka accepted students to pass down the art of Wing Chun. In 1949 Ip left Foshan and settled in Hong Kong after the Chinese communist party won the Chinese Civil War. Because Ip was a police officer on the side of Nationalist party the opposition party. Ip started his own school in Hong Kong and continue teaching wing chun, however business was bad because the students only stayed for a few months and then they quit. Moreover, he never advertise his school nor did he even put up a sign outside, he did this because he didn't want to teach everyone but rather control who his students were. If he were to advertise a school, he would be obliged to accept any student who could pay. Otherwise, he had the right to refuse anyone who would come Ip also said quote, if you are a good teacher and martial artist then the students will find you. Those students that searched you out will be dedicated and will make good martial artists, they are true and good people. Ip only wanted to teach those who are serious in learning winch and not those who just had the money and quit halfway. This is the reason why only a handful of his students stay long. Ip kept that philosophy throughout his 20 years of teaching Wing Chun.

Ip taught Bruce Lee in 1957 and this continued for a year. During that time the Chinese were against teaching martial arts to non-asians. Lee was born United States and he was part European. However Ip taught Lee, because Lee had deep interest in the art. He was one of very few people who are personally trained by Ip Man. A decade had past and it still struggle financially. So, in 1967 some of the students established an association called Ving Sun athletic Association with the objective of helping Ip earn money. However, Ip spent the money on opium. Ip passed away just five years later on December 2, 1972 from throat cancer at 149 Tung Choi Street in Hong Kong. Seven months later, Bruce Lee also passed away. Ip's greatest legacy was to make Wing Chun known globally, Ip Chun, His eldest son continued his father's legacy even at an old age. As of this writing Ip Chun is already 94 years old. He was selected as the inheritor of the wing chun legacy among other Kung Fu Masters who fought over that honor. Ip Man was buried in Wu Tip shan Cemetery in Fung ling new territories Hong Kong.



Episode 337 – Ip Man | [whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com](http://whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com)

I find it fascinating that some of the challenges facing today's martial arts instructors our present throughout history, at least throughout the history that we talk about here to focus on only teaching the most dedicated students may mean financial difficulty. To have dedicated students that will step up and try to take care of you only to have that honor squandered and have people argue over legacy and who should carry on with the title. I hope you enjoy this I hope it gives you a bit of context for kung fu, for Bruce Lee's story, for what martial arts in China was an is. Like I said in the intro is that a transcript of this I went off script tiny bit just for readability but you should be able to follow along quite fine. We're building up more and more of these so if you've missed some of the more recent historical episodes, check them out let me know what you think. If you like cool, if not that's fine. I'll give you hundred percent refund what you paid to listen. [Whistlekickmartialartsradio.com](http://Whistlekickmartialartsradio.com) and [whistlekick.com](http://whistlekick.com) are the places to go. [@whistlekick](https://twitter.com/whistlekick) is the social media to follow and [jeremy@whistlekick.com](mailto:jeremy@whistlekick.com) is my personal email address. That's all I got for you today I hope to hear from you and I'll be back to talk to you soon. Until next time train hard and smile and have a great day.