

# JACKIE CHAN



Chan, Jackie (1954- ), Chinese actor and director of action motion pictures, whose death-defying stunt work, comic manner, and elaborately choreographed fight sequences have won him an enthusiastic worldwide following. Born Chan Kwong Sang in Hong Kong, his Chinese screen name is Sing Lung, which translates as “becoming the dragon.” He is known as Jackie Chan outside Asia. At the age of seven Chan enrolled in the Chinese Opera Research Institute, a training center for the form of musical theater known as Peking opera (see Chinese Music). For ten years, Chan studied dance, martial arts, music, and acrobatics in an atmosphere of extreme discipline, acquiring skills that he would later adapt for his performances in films.

During the early 1970s Chan worked as a stuntman and fight choreographer in Hong Kong's expanding film industry, which achieved global success with a distinctive genre of action films, mixing martial arts with spectacular stunts and often startling violence. After the death of Chinese American actor Bruce Lee in 1973, film studios searched for a new martial-arts superstar, and Chan was among several young actors who were groomed as potential successors. His first major film role was in *Xin Ching-Wu Men* (*New Fist of Fury*, 1976), a sequel to an internationally popular Bruce Lee film, *Fist of Fury* (also known as *The Chinese Connection* or *The Iron Hand*, 1972). After *New Fist of Fury* failed to achieve commercial or popular success, Chan introduced changes to the martial-arts film style developed by Lee, adding elements of playful misadventure and slapstick comedy. The result, *Drunken Monkey in the Tiger's Eye* (also known as *Drunken Master*, 1978), was a major hit throughout East Asia.

Chan subsequently wrote, directed, and starred in numerous Hong Kong action films, becoming the highest-paid movie star in Asia. He also developed a reputation for executing exceptionally risky stunts, many of which have resulted in fractured bones and other injuries. Chan appeared in several American films, including *The Big Brawl* (1980), *The Cannonball Run* (1980), and *The Protector* (1985), but none of these performances significantly increased his popularity outside Asia. He received greater international attention with the release of *Police Story* (1985), a fast-paced crime film shown at major film festivals. Chan's meticulously choreographed stunts and self-effacing humor in the film inspired critics to compare him with American actor and director Buster Keaton.

Chan's reputation soared as global interest in Hong Kong cinema increased during the early 1990s. In 1996 one of his most accomplished films, *Hong Faan Kui* (1995), was released in the United States as *Rumble in the Bronx*, achieving popular and critical acclaim. In 1998 he appeared in *Rush Hour*, an action film set in Los Angeles. That same year his autobiography, *I Am Jackie Chan: My Life in Action*, appeared.