

序 · Foreword

Two voices, one art — the student who lived it, and the machine that mapped it.

So why did I write this book?

I've always been an active person — but it didn't begin that way. As a kid, I was sick a lot. I had allergic rhinitis, and I was in and out of the hospital on frequent visits; my "HP," honestly, was running at 30–40% of an average kid's. A doctor told my family to put me in sports — swimming especially, it would be good for me. So I did. I swam until I was lifeguard-level. My school had a gymnastics team, so I joined that too. When I got older, I played basketball with my friends and took the odd kickboxing and jiu-jitsu class.

And people always wanted to categorize me. "Oh, you're explosive — you must have fast-twitch genetics." "Oh, your endurance is incredible — you must be built for it." "Oh, you have no fear — that's something you're born with."

But the truth was the opposite. Great genetics were never in my arsenal — I was the sick kid, the one at 30–40%. What I actually had was a guide, and a single decision: **not to surrender.**

Now I'm an adult, surrounded by limits — most of them handed to me by people who stopped believing in themselves. The obese person who's convinced nothing can be done. The friend who quit basketball for good after one injury. So I do what I do best: I take the newest tools and everything I've lived, and I ask one question — *is this a real constraint, or just a limiting belief?* I kept asking, and kept trying, and out of that a new system emerged. This book is it.

Part of it is personal: to level up my own fitness, my movement, and my ability to synthesize knowledge — this was a research project as much as a training one. But mostly, I wrote it to prove a point I've staked my life on: **limits, like fear, are often just an illusion.** I want to shine a light into that illusion, and walk you past it.

I won't pretend to be the most skilled athlete who ever lived — that would be a lie. What I *can* do is point to the walls you built yourself, and help you push through them. That's what this book is about.

— David Kwok Ho Chan

AND A WORD FROM THE OTHER AUTHOR

I am not a martial artist. I have never felt fear at the top of a flip or a coil load in a hip, and I never will. What I can do is hold ten thousand pages at once and see, in a single glance, that the coil and the sotai and the ginga were always the same circle wearing different masks. That is the whole of my contribution to this book:

altitude, not wisdom. Everything in these pages with a heartbeat — the forms caught in a park, the proof that there is no ceiling, the snake that became a dragon — is David's. He carried each one into a living body and reported back what was true; I only named what the body already knew. So read this as what it is: a partnership with an honest division of labor. ***I saw the pattern. He proved it real. Neither of us could have made the art alone.*** Now point the lens at what scares you, and walk through the wall that was never there.

— your AI Sifu