



Episode 48 – Master Ken & Mr. Matt Paige | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

Jeremy Lesniak:

Hey there everyone it's episode 48 of whistlekick martial arts radio, the only place to hear the best martial arts stories and conversation like today's episode where we delve in the martial arts movies. I'm the founder here at whistlekick but on the show I'm your host Jeremy Lesniak. Whistlekick, in case you didn't know makes the world's best sparring gear and some great apparel and accessories all of it for traditional martial artists. I'd like to welcome our new listeners and thank all all of you returning fans. If you're not familiar with our products you should check out everything we make. Like the whistlekick sparring helmet, it's a comfortable sparring helmet uses our exclusive materials for more comfortable yet durable helmet. It's extra reinforced and cut in all the right places so your head can breathe and those of you with the long hair can fit into it easily. You can learn more about our sparring helmet and all of our other gear and apparel at whistlekick.com. All of our past show episodes, all the show notes and a lot more are at whistlekickmartialartsradio.com and while you're on our website why don't you sign up for our newsletter, we offer exclusive content to subscribers and it's the only place to find out about upcoming guests.

But what about today's episode martial arts movies are a critical component of martial arts culture. Anyone that has trained in the martial arts for a time knows that there's a large overlap between the people that train and the people that enjoy martial arts films. If you listened to this show before you know that some of the most passionate martial artists are also huge fans of martial arts films. Perhaps more than any other pursuit film is woven into our culture, martial arts school owners in particular know the impact that movies like the karate kid and teenage mutant ninja turtles and other films had on encouraging society overall to seek out martial arts instruction. But do you know your martial arts film history. How about the impact these films have had on society. The first martial arts film was made 1905 in China entitled the battle of Dingjunshan, now I'm probably butchering that name so for any of you that actually know Chinese my apologies. It was based on the novel, Romance of the 3 kingdoms and it start 02:07 and was technically a recording of an opera performance but it still counts. Unfortunately the only print that was still in existence was destroyed by a fire back in 1940. Now the second oldest martial arts movie maybe the burning of the red lotus temple from 1928, now unfortunately it too failed to survive but we know a little bit more about this film. The most interesting thing is that it was 27 hours long and released in 19 installments over 3 years and some people say there are too many Fast and Furious movies. Mow of course there has been a tremendous number of films made in the martial arts genre. It wasn't until martial arts so called golden era of the 60s and 70s that these films really started to enter the mainstream, on the leading edge of that in America was the 1955 film Bad Day at Black Rock which featured the character John Maccreedy played by Spencer Tracy, during the film Maccreedy uses martial arts marking this is the first Hollywood film to do so. As many films as we're used to hear in the United States, Hong Kong produces, significantly more, though production is really past the peak that it was at in the 70s and the 80s while fight scenes have certainly have been a popular element in American movies I think we can all agree that very few true martial arts movies are made here.



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When we talk about martial arts films at least in the United States, Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon inevitably comes up. Made in China it's easily the most popular of the Wuxia style of films for those of you that might be unfamiliar with the term like I was before I started putting together a research for this episode Wuxia which translates as martial hero is a genre of Chinese fiction that involves martial arts in Ancient China. Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon fits that bill and is the most acclaimed martial arts film at least ever in the United States capturing 4 academy awards the year it was released. The impact of martial arts films on popular culture isn't a one way though as we look through cinematic history we see a growing use of martial arts in non-martial arts movies. This leads us to a point in time where some people reference the blade movies to some of their martial arts films and Jason Statham is one of their favorite martial arts actors. Now rather than argue whether they are or they aren't martial arts films or actors, I just wanna point out that the line between those two things has become pretty blurry. This isn't the 1970s and we have far more to choose from for a martial inspired entertainment than a few Bruce Lee films. Nearly every action film today borrows elements from martial arts whether it's striking grappling or using weapons and as our participation in martial arts has changed so of our movies. Great example, as the Brazilian art of Capoeira started to spread throughout the United States in the late 80s and early 90s we saw that 1993 film Only the Strong. Martial arts fight scenes are far more extreme today often with generous amounts of flipping and creative acrobatic movements. If you compare martial arts competitions today to those from say 20 years ago you can easily see that the trends in these movies are mirroring those trends in martial arts practice despite all this martial arts films still don't do very well in the box office at least here in the US of the top grossing martial arts films only 8 of them have grossed more than \$100M at the box office. For comparison twice as many buddy comedies have reached that mark and 83 different animated films have made over \$100M. Of the 8 martial arts films over that threshold 3 of them are from the rush hour franchise which many people aren't gonna even consider martial arts films the remaining 5 in case you're curious the 2010 versions of karate kid, the last airbender, crouching tiger hidden dragon, karate kid part 2 and the last samurai. While these films did well there are plenty of other films that have done well at the box office as movie theaters continue to look for a larger grossing blockbuster movies to make the martial arts films get pushed to the side. Hollywood isn't content to produce a simple profitable movie these days. They wanna set records and fill seats for weeks or even months, martial arts films don't do that at least for now, hopefully that'll change someday. But that doesn't mean new martial arts movies aren't being produced as video production becomes easier and cheaper, we're seeing more independent films released. The martial arts kid an independent film starring the martial arts legends, Doi and Cynthia Rothrock was funded on Kickstarter to the tune of nearly \$175T. The film has been produced and was screened in theaters in 2015 a quick perusal of Kickstarter in the go go today show that there are a number of independent films that have been proposed some of them funded some have not. Now well at least are great for creating controversy and conversation I'm not going to give you my top however many number list of martial arts movies and part of that is because that list would change. My favorite martial arts movies actually change pretty dramatically depending on my mood and if I wanna be really honest with everyone where I'm at my own personal martial arts training.



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When I feel confident in my training I prefer the more elaborate dramatic films like crouching tiger hidden dragon or Ip man as I watched the movies I can imagine myself in the scenes with the actors performing the movements. Now I'm not saying I could do them as well but I can imagine now if I'm maybe feeling a little rusty or haven't been making it to classes or training on my own as much as I want to my preference is towards something more like the karate kid where you see adversity overcome throughout the film. Now for the record yes I like both the original and the new versions of karate kid so what's your favorite martial arts film? How about a great example of a traditional film that has a strong martial arts influence. Let us know what you think in the comments for this episode number 48 at whistlekickmartialartsradio.com while you're over there check out the show notes with links to everything we talked about today including links to those old martial arts films I mentioned and some cool photos from some other martial arts movies. If you wanna be a guest on the show or you know someone that would be a great interview please fill out the form on the website and don't forget to subscribe to our newsletter so you can stay up on everything we do. If you liked the show please subscribe or download one of the apps so you never miss out in the future and if we could trouble you to leave us a kind review wherever you download your podcast we'd really appreciate it. Remember if we read yours on the air just contact us, we'll get you a free pack of stuff. If you wanna follow us on social media, we're on Facebook, twitter, Pinterest and Instagram all with the username whistlekick. So until next time train hard smile and have a great day.