



Episode 352 – Master David Lonebear Sanipass | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com



Jeremy Lesniak:

Master Sanipass, welcome to whistlekick Martial Arts Radio.

David Sanipass:

Thank you, Jeremy. I'm honored to be here today to share some of my adventures and stories with you.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah, I'm honored to have you here. And you know, listeners, I'm not gonna give it away, I'm not gonna spoil it but we're gonna talk about some stuff today. Some martial traditions that are different. And that's always been one of my goals for the show is to bring as many different people of as many different backgrounds on as possible because I think that the more we do that, the more we get to see that you know what, we're not that different. We're all really trying to do the same thing with roughly the same tools and that makes us far more alike than it does different. I mean, would you agree, sir? Am I...?

David Sanipass:



Episode 352 – Master David Lonebear Sanipass | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

I do agree on that. Yeah, our lives are on the same road but sometimes the roads are just so far apart that we don't see each other.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah, totally. So let's start. It's kind of a cliché way to start but it's the way we have to start - how did you find martial arts?

David Sanipass:

Well that's quite a long story. I want to go back to when I was very young. I wasn't in the States. I lived on a reserve and I was very young before I came to the United States and we stayed secluded on a mountain for many years. And my English wasn't so good when I came here because when I came here, I joined your schools, your educational schools and I didn't speak very good English. So I started school when I was... I started in the fourth grade here and ended up not getting along so well with the population, I would say, because I was a little bit different - that my color skin was different and I spoke a different language. And where I came from, it wasn't exactly... they weren't welcome to the native tradition, I guess. And then I got picked on quite a lot. My first self-defense was wrestling. As natives, we used to wrestle quite a lot, and my grandfather and my uncle used to wrestle. So they taught me how to wrestle right off and a lot the times I went to school then I get into situations that I needed to defend myself or to wrestle. So that was to the native community but when I got a little bit older and went to 7th, 8th grade, the wrestling turned into more fist fighting. And I can handle one person but there was like two or three other people; that was harder to defend myself. So my father was an Olympic boxer, he taught me how to box and I did that for several years. But again, growing up in a non-native community, I get into more fights and ended up getting beat-up quite a lot because like I said, I can handle one person but two or three people, I could not handle. So my... I think my dad suggested that I take up some sort of self-defense. And when he went to the army, they showed him Jiu Jitsu and he showed me some of the Jiu Jitsu but he wasn't a teacher; he showed me some of the moves. I ended up going to a Karate class that was in Presque Isle at the time and I think it was like \$22 a month for twice a week, and I did that for quite a long time. I did that for almost two and a half years... maybe less than that, and came proficient in the kata and... I was young and I had an attitude. My attitude was that I fought with anger, you know; that I didn't use the martial arts, I just ended up fighting with anger and ended up still losing the fights. For quite a long time that I... it was Taekwondo and that's quite of an extensive art. There were a lot of exercises, stretches and things like that, and it is a proficient art if you can adapt it to your life. So how would you used to finish the story? The story... I was in competition after several years in Taekwondo, and I went to Bangor, Maine for a demonstration and there was other classes



Episode 352 – Master David Lonebear Sanipass | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

there that were doing demonstrations. There was people that was in local areas that were instructors that are recruiting for their classes and there was pretty big gym, and our class went there. I think in our class at that time, we had about 30 or 40 people that would do kata and of course some of the demonstrations and take-downs and like that. I was there to break ice and I had one-fourth ice blocks or stack them, and I broke ice with my hands; that was part of my demonstration. And in that demonstration, there was another class there and they were doing dance... well it looked like dance from my point of view and I watched them for a while and I think it was like... It wasn't Tai Chi but it was pretty complicated dance. And I thought I would watch out a little bit and one of the students come over and said oh, you can break ice. I said yeah, I broke the ice. He said, well you should come over and watch our class sometimes; this is what we do. And stupid me said, oh yeah? I said, that looks interesting but you probably can't win a fight in that or I wouldn't try to do that in a fight. He said, oh. I looked at the guy, his name is Dan, Daniel... little guy that went and introduced himself. He said, well you should come over and meet Master, you know, you can ask him some questions. So at the end of the demonstration, I was packing up ready to go and they were still in and Dan comes, just come over and meet the Master. And I come over and went over there and met some of the students, and the students didn't have a uniform or gi or anything like that. Some of them are just regular clothing, some had a gi top or something or a Kung Fu uniform but they weren't organized in the uniforms. So the Master come over and said, oh hi, I see you break ice. And he says, you're very powerful and things like that. I said, yeah. And then we got talking and he explained what the art he was doing. He said, we're not dancing; we call it the Dance of Death. And I thought that was so cliché, I started laughing. And then he said, well you should come to the class sometimes and we can show you what else that we do. And I said oh, well. I said, it looks all good but it would never work in a fight; you could not do that in a fight. I said, you need to be able to break here with power and the stress and everything. He said, well there's power here, it's just hidden. So I think a couple of weeks passed by and one of the other students that I met, she was in one of our other classes in Taekwondo and she says, well you should come down. I'm going down, why don't you come down with me? So I said, I'll go look. And she said, she worked on my ego, she said maybe you can show the Master something. And I said, yeah I probably can do that. I had a black belt in Taekwondo, you know. And I went down there with my gi and my black belt and of course, I put that on and nobody else in the class had a gi or a black belt. Everybody is just dressed normally. And Master comes out and he introduces himself again. He said, I'm glad you can make it. He says, she said that you have some stuff to show me. I said, yeah I can show you some stuff. He said, well let's go to the mat. So we went out in the mat and here I was, in my gi, I had a black bottom and white top and black belt. He says, how would you defend yourself from a blow? And I said, well I would block and do a roundhouse, and I did all that. And he says, why don't you hit me and I'll show you what we do? And at this time, the Master looked like he was ready for the old folks home. He was skinny, hardly no hair. He had Nike sneakers on, pants was too short. He



Episode 352 – Master David Lonebear Sanipass | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

has a white button up shirt. He didn't look like nothing. He looked like, you know, if I hit him, I could break him in two. And I said, no, I don't want to do that. I have a black belt, I could hurt you, you know. He said, no go ahead. And he kinda pushed me with one hand. He kinda pushed me back and I kinda tripped. And I said, well. He said... I said, no I don't want to. Then he pushed me again. Then he ended up pushing me so hard that I kinda came off my two feet, landed on my butt on the ground. He says, go ahead and hit me. And I get up, I said, I'm gonna leave. This is getting crazy, I'm gonna leave. If I kick you here, I can hurt you. He said no, come back here. When he did that, he took his finger and put it on my shoulder. And as soon as he did that, I had sharp pain going to my back and my arm. And of course, I reacted to that and I tried to push him back but he wasn't there. I ended up kinda going forward a little bit and falling on my shoulder and getting back up. I said no, I'm gonna go. So he grabbed me, and then I did an arm lock and put me down and that put his feet right around my neck, choked me out, and let me go. And of course, then I get mad then I tried to hit him. I didn't hit him; I tried to kick him, I tried to grab him, I tried to do all the different things that I learned and ended up falling on my face, and me just getting so embarrassed. I got so embarrassed, I usually don't tell people this but I got so embarrassed, I cried. I was crying, and I ended up running out of his dojo and get in my car and going home. So that's part of that story that, you know, people don't really realize that, you know; it's not about the belt, it's not about the gi, it's not about the dojo. It's about who you are and who you think you are. At that time, I thought I was pretty bad because I didn't hit in the fights and now I'm starting to win some fights. I ended up not going to school for a couple of weeks and him calling the house. And I thought that was kind of weird that he knew my number. Back then, we didn't have a computer or anything of that technology but he called the house and see how I was. And I did talked with him that day and I said, I'm fine. He said, well you should come back, you know, there's more to that. And to me, it was a bunch of trickery. And he said... and I'm thinking to my mind, he tricked me. He did all these tricks on me to put me down. So I went down, I think, about a month later to his class and I was still taking Taekwondo from another class, and of course I wear my black belt, my gi. He didn't say anything about that. And he had me sit on... he had some bags in there, [12:29](#) something like that, I sat on this bag for about a month watching the class. I'm waiting to join the class but he never said to join or anything like that. But after about a month and a half that I got up and start learning this dance, what they were doing. And then there was skipping, that's really what they were doing. There was no hits, there was no punches, there was no things like that. It was just learning how to breathe and how to move your body in such a way that it's efficient when you are moving your hands. Breathe and you can do this forever. It was almost like a kata but it was like regulating your heart and the oxygen and how to affect the breeze around you, and we worked a while with candles. We had six candles around us, and what we had to do in this dance is to make these candles dance, not put them out. It's to make these candles dance - to make them go low, make the flames go higher. And going to this training, I didn't think the importance of that. I thought I was... I was waiting for a



Episode 352 – Master David Lonebear Sanipass | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

candy, I was waiting for when was this gonna real stuff going to happen, you know? When am I gonna learn how to punch, when am I gonna learn how to kick, when am I gonna learn how to break boards and things like that? But for the first year, I didn't do any of that, you know. I had anger issues that I brought to the surface quite a lot. The anger issues that came when I used to get into fights, I used to get beat-up and black eyes, bloody nose, just things like that, and I used my aggression for aggression. And Master says that river never uses aggression or [14:22](#) And I tried to come up like, I said what about if it hit a rock? He says, the water goes around. How about a waterfalls? He said, falls [14:31](#) to gravity. So going through all this, it wasn't like a philosopher. I didn't come to the light, it didn't come to the surface, oh this is the way that we should do it. It was to me, for someone who had a fight to learn this because it went against everything that I knew in native tradition and some of the other things that I know is that to not to oppose force. But if somebody challenges me for a fight, you know, I'm gonna oppose that force. If somebody was going to hurt my family, I was going to defend the family. But he taught that we are water, how we see energy through water - our eyes, our mouth is water, the body is water. As the [15:23](#) of the style that he taught Sho-Kai. And Sho-Kai is an old Japanese word meaning energy of water, and to learn to conduct myself in that way of water. So I think that's... I'll stop right there but I'm gonna elaborate more on

Jeremy Lesniak:

Sure

David Sanipass:

them

Jeremy Lesniak:

Sure. There's a lot there.

David Sanipass:

There's a lot.

Jeremy Lesniak:

We heard a lot and you know, the story that you told about being out on the mat, I mean that's... that sounds like something right out of a movie.



Episode 352 – Master David Lonebear Sanipass | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

David Sanipass:

It does. At that time, I didn't know who... we didn't have TV so I didn't know about Bruce Lee or Chuck Norris or Joe Lewis or David Carradine. So I didn't know about all these people. And I remember being in class and they said... somebody wants to be like Bruce Lee and I thought Bruce Lee was another student from another school like down state or something like that. I didn't know he was a movie actor. And you know, people come in and was who the heck is this Bruce Lee guy? I didn't know, I didn't see a Bruce Lee movie until 1982 because we didn't go to movies pretty much and so...

Jeremy Lesniak:

Wow

David Sanipass:

But I did see on TV at one time, Kung Fu Theater back in the late '70s and I thought that was so hokey.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Right, right because it was.

David Sanipass:

It was.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Because it was but it's still... there's still something about it. I mean we've had quite a few guests on the show who have talked about their love for Kung Fu Theater. And there were folks who even found the martial arts from that program and ultimately, you know, learned it. Yeah, it's hokey but you know, it still has a special place in their hearts.

David Sanipass:

Yes.

Jeremy Lesniak:



Episode 352 – Master David Lonebear Sanipass | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

So there's a point in time I want to go back to in the story that you just told us, and it's that moment. There was a pivotal moment in there that you kinda moved through quickly and I want to unpack that a bit. So here you are, you've learned a number of martial arts; you've learned some wrestling and some Karate and Taekwondo and earned a black belt. And you go to this demonstration and, you know, you're encouraged, maybe even bribed a bit with some of your ego, to come and show this Master of this other tradition some of the things that you know. And you went... I mean forgive me for saying, it doesn't sound like that first experience was something we would call positive.

David Sanipass:

It was not positive. It was embarrassing because all the students were watching, and my ego really got slammed that day because I thought, honestly, I was awesome, you know? Because I had a black belt, I broke ice and boards, I can bend a railroad spike with my hands and then it was like, what the heck did he do? It was like... I remember staying home for two weeks out of school and I could not figure what he had done. I mean he was way be- I thought it was some sort of black magic or something that... well it was something I wasn't known. But he said, my ego blinded me from seeing and I thought to myself, I can see perfectly. I used to call him a Chinese fortune cookie because... Then he said I'm not Chinese; I'm Japanese, it's a whole different thing.

Jeremy Lesniak:

So what changed? So you're there and you're embarrassed, and you leave, and you stay at home for weeks, and he calls you. But something about that exchange or the phone call that you had with him, something happened that made you interested enough that you were willing to risk that humiliation again and go back.

David Sanipass:

I it's that - when we made that phone call. He called me by my native name. My English name is David; my native name is David, and he called me David. And there was something up with that when he said that. And that was like... and he says, I would like to show you what I've done to you. And I was curious again, I want to know what he's done, you know? What... How can he, an old man like that, defeat a black belt, you know? And I wanted to know; I was curious. And when I got there, then we just... I sat there for a couple of months on those bags just watching, and it was up to me. I could have participated the first day if I wanted to but I was waiting for the instructor to tell me what to do - the Master. And then he had other instructors in there, one of them was Daniel that invited in the demonstration. And he said, when you're ready, then



Episode 352 – Master David Lonebear Sanipass | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

could join in. And then a couple of months later, I was ready. And I think doing something different, because I was waiting for the real hard stuff - the push-ups, the push-ups on fists and things like that - and here, I was just doing dance routines, and I couldn't figure that one out. I think my curiosity kept me with him for the 78 years that I've studied with him. It's that there was always... there was never a lesson that you could write in a book. It was always something different; it was always something there that I didn't recognize. And it was the Dance of Death because when you're in Sho-Kai, you practice with each other. You're trusting each other coming so close with a full strike into the eyes or the throat or into the [21:15](#) that if you made that go a little more, you'd actually kill that person. So the Dance of Death is a volunteer between two people.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Now it's a cliché, right? At the statement when the student is ready, the Master will appear.

David Sanipass:

It's a cliché but in my... See, there's a lot more to the story

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah

David Sanipass:

That my father knew the Master

Jeremy Lesniak:

Okay

David Sanipass:

Way beyond before I was born. He settled in... My dad was going to Korea in the Second World War that a Master came over here because it was at that time that they, the Japanese, when they made it Pearl Harbor, part of his family was [22:08](#) Pearl Harbor, Master had two brothers. One of the brothers participated in the Bataan Death March, I don't know if you've heard of that; and the other brother fought with the Americans. So there was a division of the two brothers there. And Master couldn't go back to his village because of the Death March that his brother



Episode 352 – Master David Lonebear Sanipass | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

was disgraced in front of their families. And my Master came here, suggested my father to stay here, and I didn't know that. Until four or five years, my mother revealed that to me.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Now do you think that the Master knew who you were and all that? I mean was that...?

David Sanipass:

Yes, I'm pretty sure he did.

Jeremy Lesniak:

But he didn't tell you he knew -

David Sanipass:

Right

Jeremy Lesniak:

Your father. There's something... So folks who have listened to the show know that, you know, I'm pretty darn open-minded. I'm pretty open-minded about a lot of thing as, you know, mysticism and philosophy and religion and just all the ways that the world could work. And this sounds like one of those stories that just... it had some help. I think that's probably the best way I could express it.

David Sanipass:

I think it did and I think... My uncle used to say it had some coaching. But I had to be... again, like I said, I studied Kung Fu, Jiu Jitsu, all the different... Judo... I've studied all those but it's like I didn't relate with those instructors, you know? One of the questions is that who would you want to practice with again? I think that in my life, I would like to practice with Master again, you know? I don't know any because I've not burst into the martial art world of who's out there and who's doing what. Master and my grandfather has always taught me to be non-violent. Because non-violent is not a state of physical; it's a state of spiritual. It's that... we have to be able to have the spiritual before we have the physical because if we don't have the spiritual, then wars will break out again. That's how wars start.



Episode 352 – Master David Lonebear Sanipass | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

Jeremy Lesniak:

Sure. Now what's the name of this art again?

David Sanipass:

Sho-Kai.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Sho-Kai. Yeah, I want to make sure I'd get that right.

David Sanipass:

And there's no books written about it. The history of Sho-Kai is itself; it's that during the 12th to the 14 Century, the [25:00](#) era, I may be wrong about this, but the martial arts was illegal to practice in Japan at one time because of the [25:12](#) that was out there. And this was passed down through shopkeepers. Anybody who had crafts... there's a couple of stories about the tin maker, and it was passed on through that way. It wasn't ninjustsu but it was a defense or more of I would say the middle class.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I'm gonna see what I can find. It's fascinating stuff.

David Sanipass:

Good luck

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah, and I enjoy a challenge like that, too. It... You know, it almost sounds... it sounds like it was the perfect martial art for you.

David Sanipass:

Yes, and you know, training with Master, I remember that I had my own schools out there. I had about 130-140 students and plus I went to Master every Tuesdays and Thursdays and sometimes Saturdays, and I run my classes in between that. So I spent most of my young life in classes



Episode 352 – Master David Lonebear Sanipass | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

teaching. Because I started teaching martial arts probably when I was 16 or 17, and stayed in his class for a long time teaching in his class after a while.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Most people aren't teaching at 16. How did that happen?

David Sanipass:

You get knocked in the nose, your teeth knocked out. At that time, I got stabbed twice so yeah, you do have a tendency to listen more and to be able to put this in a practicality form.

Jeremy Lesniak:

So it was the real world application of it that led other people to wanting you to teach.

David Sanipass:

Yes.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Okay.

David Sanipass:

I remember somebody that was a boxer and he came up to me in one of my classes and he said, if you can knock me down, because that's what he was doing for a living, boxing. He says, if you can knock me down, I will study with you. And I said, when you said knock you down, what do you mean? He says, sit on my butt. So I brought up a chair and I said, have a seat. He sat down. I said, well welcome to my class.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Did that work?

David Sanipass:



Episode 352 – Master David Lonebear Sanipass | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

It worked. He was impressed with that and he stayed with me for six and a half years. I know that I see on computer now all the different martial arts and the craziness that goes on out there. It's like, you know, it wasn't like that when I was growing up. It was really hard to find a book in Presque Isle, Maine on martial arts or anything like that. Because I ordered all my books from Boston, and that very limited there, too.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Now you brought up, and we actually talked about it a little bit before we started recording, so this might be a good time now. There are folks who are going to be listening to this thinking, this is BS. This is crazy. This... we could lump this in with, you know, pick whatever silliness that you've seen online that people considered to be silly because we all have a different definition of what that is. And I'm sure that you've experienced that before; I mean your initial experience with this style, with your Master there that you've referred to so reverently, was disbelief. So how do you wrap your mind around that? How do we explain to the people, myself included, who have never witnessed this style and the things that go along with it? How do we explain this in a way... because most of the folks listening are engaged in what we would call more "normal" or "standard" martial arts - Karate, Taekwondo - arts that you're familiar with - Kung Fu?

David Sanipass:

Well you've got to remember -

Jeremy Lesniak:

How do we explain it to them?

David Sanipass:

Well you gotta remember where martial arts came from and how it came be. Though it wasn't at it until the least [29:43](#) 1900s that means the way. Before that, the reason why it was called martial arts is because it was a use for a defense to be used in military purposes. What we're doing now is so exploited and is online. You can find just about anything. But this is my very first time I ever spoke about this martial art any time. You won't never find a broadcast of me saying... this is my very first time over 40-somewhat years of speaking about it. But I used it in a defense form, that means between what I get in the fights and after that, I use it in a lot of defense because where I'm from, I'm not that accepted as... Right now, of course, I'm Native American. But back then, I wasn't accepted. I got in more fights than I can possibly imagine but I've lost more fights than I won. And I think that any martial art like that, you would find people like me



Episode 352 – Master David Lonebear Sanipass | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

in there that practices it and uses it for the way of life. I've used Sho-Kai last 40-somewhat years, the way of life - about the philosophy, the way I conduct myself, the way my manners, the way I see things as that part of that martial art worked in a Native American part of myself. I use both of the philosophies now in my life to get me here. And the ones that think this is BS, that's fine. They have their opinion. I mean we... Out there, you'll see a lot of different things and I clam nothing. I claim that I'm happy and compassionate and kind. That's all I can... That's all I can say, right there. And any martial art that begets the point that you are happy and enjoying life; it's not about black belts or any of that. It's about the spiritual contentment on where you are.

Jeremy Lesniak:

You know I've heard a lot of things over the years especially the last few because of Martial Arts Radio, because of my opportunities to speak to so many different martial artists, folks such as yourself, people such as those of you who are listening. But we just had a first; I've never had anyone volunteer that they lost more fights than they won, right. That's pretty much the opposite of what most of us talk about as martial artists. But what I find really striking about that is I think that that's a pretty good anecdote for you, at least the way I've come to know you over the last 45 minutes or so that we've been speaking; and I think there's a lot we can take away from that. My personal view, we learn best when we make mistakes. And so when you lose a fight, there's a lot more opportunity there to kind of run the tape back in a sense and say what could I have done differently? Right? I mean what would... what's your take away from that?

David Sanipass:

A target makes a very poor impression. I find that.... I figured out that I wasn't trying to win the fights. I was just trying to get out there alive. And my situations where I got into, or came out of is, you know, somebody wanted to hurt you. I think one of the situations I can remember that... I think it was 45 guys and they all had things in their hand that they were gonna hurt me with. And part of this... I could use my ego and stay there and hopefully get one of these people, or I can practice the way of the bird - fly away or run away - and I decided that day that I was gonna fly away. And I know that I tell this to my students, [33:54](#) broke their arms and I said yeah, I could have probably done that but they could have... because in a combat situation that you'd get into, you don't know if they have a gun and knife or shotgun or somebody else is gonna come in. As if you take the flight, at least, you are free. And I still think that that was the right decision I made, you know, because when I tell my students, I tell the students [34:23](#) They have ax handles and knives and like that and I break it up and I said, I just ran away but I'm alive. A lot of people don't understand that; they... just because you practice the martial art years and years that you can break somebody's arm. If chickens at Kentucky Fried Chicken didn't run, they'd be eaten.



Episode 352 – Master David Lonebear Sanipass | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah, absolutely. Now I get that. One of the things that we've talked about, kind of [34:59](#), that... my gut tells me that there's more to talk about here so I hope it's okay, is where you came from. We talked about your native lineage and you know, we talked a little bit before the show that that's still... that's a substantial part of your life. It's who you are. Is the combination, I guess, of these two traditions, this Native tradition that you come from culturally and this old martial arts tradition that you stepped into, what is the fusion or combination of those look like for you?

David Sanipass:

I think that's a part of any story, that combination of how we adapt ourselves to different teachings. Teachings from the Native tradition and the Japanese tradition fit like a glove. They're the opposites [36:15](#) quality. There are parts that I don't understand how they fit so well sometimes because my philosophy now is peace and quiet over excitement. And that's hard to do in this day and age because, you know... Somebody said oh why don't you take on 40 people at one time and that would be a good demonstration? But that's a demonstration for somebody else. What Master taught is that peace and quiet over excitement. I learned martial arts out of anger when we first started, and that was my initiative. That was my motivation of practice because I didn't want to be hurt anymore so I ended up practicing six, seven hours a day for seven to eight years of just, you know... But I was practicing for a fight that would never happen... I was fighting against myself. I remember when somebody tried to hit me and I figured that this person's awfully slow. I mean he was trying to hit me and kick and all the different things, and I was just blocking and moving out of this person's way. But that's after six years with Master though, before that I would have handled it a whole different way that the guy ended up getting tired and just standing up, getting frustrated and walking away. But that choice then that I can do that, that I was not angry, that I had a little bit of control of my anger at the time, the people don't realize how much ego rules our human spirit. You know, it may embarrass us if we're gonna say... gonna give them road rage. You take road rage, that's the same way. We practice if we have that two-ton car in front of us so we're safe, and somebody cuts in front of us, we give them a finger. And now we're safe because the car's gonna protect us. But [38:22](#) a whole different thing. You know, I was like all right what if that person has a gun or has a pair of knife or... You see it online, people getting road rage and it could lead after something. That's the same way with ourselves, our spiritual self, is that yeah, this looks like this is quite a story but don't we all have quite a story? So I was thinking like I've heard weirder stories than this. This is ain't all the story. This is not even page one of the story. I mean, creating all the classes and all the classes that I've taught and all the people I have taught, there's stories upon stories. We can write a novel if you wanted to hear.



Episode 352 – Master David Lonebear Sanipass | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

Jeremy Lesniak:

And I think it would make a great novel and maybe someday you'll, you know, find the time to do that because I think people would read this.

David Sanipass:

It'd be interesting. I'm not much of a writer. My schedule... because my, of course, life changes. I was a master carpenter for many years and built houses, built all kinds of things and now my life has changed the last couple of years. I'm a jeweler now; I make jewelry. My Master was a crafts person himself. He was a master sword-builder. And then when he came with his family, built swords for emperors, and he taught me how to build knives and swords and katanas and all the different things.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Fascinating.

David Sanipass:

And I'm a blacksmith before that, too. I built shoe horses.

Jeremy Lesniak:

You've done a bunch of different things

David Sanipass:

Very much

Jeremy Lesniak:

But martial arts has been kinda the constant thread, it sounds like.

David Sanipass:

Well it did brought myself together, gave me a focus that... I didn't think of the practice like, oh you know martial arts? That's not whatever was... it was part of my family as part of my spiritualism now, of who I am. When I pray each day that usually done... I'm usually doing kata



Episode 352 – Master David Lonebear Sanipass | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

or keeping myself [40:27](#) as I still practice everyday. You only stop practice [40:33](#) The first lesson in practice of Master Tom is to breathe. And he said, the last lesson that you're ever gonna learn is breathe... not to breathe.

Jeremy Lesniak:

And if someone was to come to one of your classes, I mean you gave us an example of what the demonstration from this Sho-Kai art look like and what your first experience stepping into their school, their dojo look like, what does it look like today when you're teaching it?

David Sanipass:

You're immediately added to the class and start doing what everybody else was doing - breathing, dancing, and practicing. The secret to our class is new students. To any class, it should be always new students.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Why?

David Sanipass:

Because if we could practice a week, take one class and we practice with our class of 20 people for five years, we only get the teachings for 20 people. There's a thousand movements out there that you don't know and the new students will bring them in.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Can you talk more about that?

David Sanipass:

Yeah. We practice the blocks, strikes, take-downs, all the different things with... you say that I use my top student. And he pretty much knows your... what you're gonna do. Usually you could throw him, he's gonna go with the throw. But we want people to be able to be resistant from that. If I'm gonna throw somebody, I wanna be able to... somebody that not knowing what I'm doing so I could throw as proficient not contrived. That's the secret in new students with the instructors, is how they get... Cause you're always instructing over and over and over. There's never a point that you're gonna instruct the same kata over because people do kata different



Episode 352 – Master David Lonebear Sanipass | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

ways, because they're shorter or some are stronger, some are weaker. But you want to have some sort of general idea on what that throw is gonna be like and where the center is and how to find the center. Because finding a center of a 250-pound person and a 180-pound person's a whole different thing; the methodology is different. And the new students would teach us that.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Cool. It sounds like the, I guess, the philosophical side of this art is a little more front and center than in some other arts.

David Sanipass:

Yeah

Jeremy Lesniak:

Is that fair?

David Sanipass:

Yeah, we have a lot of katas and we have methodology to the take-downs and things like that. But we have room for improvement, always.

Jeremy Lesniak:

It reminds me, I mean you compared it to Tai Chi in your first description, and it sounds similar. Not in the way that Tai Chi is often taught here in the United States as just a movement practice but if you get into the martial arts side of Tai Chi, it sounds very similar to what I understand of that. Is that a fair comparison?

David Sanipass:

Tai Chi was a 50-pound rock.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Oh. What do you mean?

David Sanipass:



Episode 352 – Master David Lonebear Sanipass | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

Yeah. Well you think of Tai Chi and the free movement energy and it's beautiful. But our art is like all right, you can do the movements but try to do it with a 50-pound rock in your hand and you bring the rock above your head, side, underneath, and use that rock to practice. The Sho-Kai is a... I remember going to Master's class, I ordered a Bo staff and it was a well-balanced Bo staff. I think it cost me 40 bucks and I brought it in the class and he said, oh great, I needed one of those. And he took it and stuck it in his garden so the vines would grow on it. And I could never forget for a couple of months why he did that but I left that there and the vines growing. And he says, go find me a Bo staff from the woods. And then I went out and found a maple that was pretty straight. I cut that, and that was my Bo staff for five years. Because the balance of things, even chuck you know, the 45:02 chucks weren't balanced; I had struggles on mine... I made mine with horse hair and use it in such a way to use the woods... braid it into the woods so it'd be a chuck as the original chucks were 45:17 And to make them uneven; to be able to use something uneven. Even the sword, the Bo staff, the short staff, Jo, all the ones that I made myself. And the way it roped... The way it roped is a weapon like the dart but it's just a rope and a four ounce lead ball and then a bit with a monkey first holding the thing and using that, that 16-feet... and what that was used for us to knock people off horses.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Okay. That's fascinating; fascinating stuff. Now what's keeping you going? You know, you're passionate, you're teaching, you're training. Why? It's my favorite question to ask our guests - why? What's your why?

David Sanipass:

My why is that I enjoy life. I remember being young and practice on the beaches with Master and all the different places and students. But I just enjoy life as it is today. I enjoy what I do, I'm privileged to even... to share my life with my wife and my dog and everything else. I enjoy life today. I mean I don't consider myself a martial artist. I consider myself a person that moves with the wind; I guess that's the only way I can describe it. It's that when I'm outside, we practice 46:46 Sometimes we practice inside but most of our dojo is the day. If it's pouring rain, we're out practicing. If it's 110 degrees, we're out practicing. If it's a nice, we'll practice. So there's no excuse not to practice. And that's the way Sho-Kai is; we practice in all elements and my instructors do the same thing. They make sure that when we first get it that we practice in the elements first because when we get into situations when we get into conflicts that's never... might be 70 degrees but it might be the dark of night, it might be raining, you might be getting out of the car, somebody might have a gun to you. We work with the body itself because part of being a martial artist, Master made sure that I knew about anatomy; how the body worked and



Episode 352 – Master David Lonebear Sanipass | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

physics and all the different other sciences that go with it - from chemistry to how to sharpen a blade.

Jeremy Lesniak:

And if people want to find you online, I know you have a website and you sent some links - and we'll be sure to put those in the show notes which for anybody who might be new, whistlekickmartialartsradio.com - but for folks that, you know, are poised with pen and paper as I am or otherwise have a great memory, where should we send them?

David Sanipass:

Yeah, just look at those sites. I know I have a lot of people that come from different places that come to the class and the expectation is to see an old man creeping along. But I'm not that old. I can still run like a 20-year old so... To be patient with this practice because it's not what you think, you know. We don't have you down there doing push-ups over and over and over. We're learning about the spiritual science about the body itself and how the body works. What you can put up with, what gets you mad; what makes you happy? You know, we have all different sizes [48:54](#) everybody could be a martial artist. All they have to do is stay with [48:59](#) they stay with.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Awesome, awesome. And as we wind up here, what parting words would give to the folks who are listening?

David Sanipass:

Every martial art out there, everything that deals with martial art, practice. Because there's no one particular martial art that work the best; it's what works for you. And if it works for you, then that's what you should train with. People are so general and going in different martial arts and they're looking for the greatest martial arts, you know, and everything else. It's what works for you, you know. If it's beating your hands on a beach and squeezing sand, and that works for you, that's the martial art. Because a martial art member, there's thousands and thousands over years that have been lost. And to find the true martial art is the true martial art, you can find it in yourself.