



Episode 412 – Shifu Chris Goedecke | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com



Jeremy Lesniak:

Hello, everyone and welcome! This is whistlekick martial arts radio episode 412. Today, my guest is Shifu Chris Goedecke. My name is Jeremy Lesniak, your host for this show, the founder of whistlekick and a passionate martial artist. So passionate, in fact, I bring you two episodes a week and maybe it's a bit of misnomer to say I because it's more than just me making this show happen. We've got a great team and I appreciate every single one of them and I appreciate you! I appreciate all the help, the support, the love that you've shown us over the last 4, yes, four year of this show and if you want to show us some love, the best place to do it is at whistlekick.com. Check out the things that we make, the things that we do and see if there's something there that interests you whether it's one of the other free projects that we're involved in or maybe one of the products that we make. If you want to find the show notes with transcripts, photos, videos, links, whole bunch more from every episode we've ever done, you can find them at whistlekickmartialartsradio.com. Oh, I almost forget, the discount code: `PODCAST15` is going to get you 15% off every single thing we make at whistlekick.com so head on over, use that, maybe sign up for the newsletter. Check it all out! With over 400 episodes recorded, it's rare that we get someone on this show that is bringing us kind of a new angle or a new, I don't want to say style, but a new perspective, that's probably the best word; of martial arts and martial training but that's what we have here today. Shifu Chris Goedecke talks about some of the roots of martial arts, specifically Karate, that I didn't know about. I'm going to guess many folks don't know about and it was a fascinating



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conversation. Of course, we talked about him and his journey and I think you're going to like it so here we go. I can hear you now! There you are!

Chris Goedecke:

I was like I hope the technology is going to work well for us but it seems to be fine. How are you?

Jeremy Lesniak:

I'm doing well and yourself?

Chris Goedecke:

Good! Great! Nice day, we've had tons of rain here in New Jersey so I'm happy the sun is finally out.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah, we're getting it too. I mean, generally, our weather is about a day behind yours, usually a little bit cooler.

Chris Goedecke:

Yeah, it's a little cool today but that's good. I like it. Yeah, it's funny, I usually talk to somebody who's in Hungary every Tuesday at 2 o'clock for 2 hours so this feels comfortable to me.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Well, good! Good! I thank you for doing this.

Chris Goedecke:

No, my pleasure! Any time you get the chance to talk about the things you love, you can't get better than that.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I fully agree, I fully agree. I often say that somehow I get to call this my job and I don't know how I got that opportunity. I mean, I know logistically how but I just feel very blessed.

Chris Goedecke:

You know what? I totally agree with you. Years ago, back in the '70s, I wrote a couple of articles, they got accepted in the trade magazines and then that's it. Hey! This is a great opportunity for me to track down people I'd like to talk to, do articles on them.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Exactly!



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Chris Goedecke:

Yes, so I know how you're feeling. What am I? 399?

Jeremy Lesniak:

You're going to be, I want to say, 412.

Chris Goedecke:

Oh, 412, okay. So, you got...does this air on Thursday? Does this air immediately? What is it?

Jeremy Lesniak:

We got a few weeks delay.

Chris Goedecke:

Oh, few weeks delay. Okay.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah, reason being, it's a combination of just making sure we have the time to edit it properly, create some buffer as well as, unfortunately, early on in the show's history, there were a lot of no-shows so I would have, what I thought were this nice flow of guests, all spread out and then, 2 no-shows, at the right time, creates this gap where I'm going oh, I need an...it's Wednesday, I need something for this coming Monday and then the person doing the editing is pressed for time and everything so...

Chris Goedecke:

Boy, that's foolish on the part of the no-shows. I mean, maybe there's unforeseen circumstances for them but nowadays, it's a great opportunity to just get your stuff out there.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I'd like to say so and, honestly, it's really interesting if you look at the caliber of the reputation of the people. It's not the biggest names and it's not the nobodies. You know, the people that nobody's heard. It's the people who think they're larger than they are that suddenly, they're...I'd like to say that the roster of guests I've brought on reaches the top.

Chris Goedecke:

Yeah, you've had some impressive people on. I have a good funny story for you so...a former student of mine reached out to me and said, hey, have you ever heard of whistlekick radio? I go, no, not really. He said, well, it might be a radio show you'd like to get on so I quickly went on this site, looked it up, I said, oh, absolutely, I'll be on the show.



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Jeremy Lesniak:

Cool!

Chris Goedecke:

And I reached out to you guys and you guys are fine.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah, I got that first inquiry came through to me and I forwarded that over to Leslie because that's what she does because she helps me screen people out and she's also responsible for reaching out to people cold and inviting them on so it makes sense to have one person kind of organize it. Right now, she's kind of standing down because we're 6 weeks out between interview and posting and I don't like it to be that long. My ideal is a month. That's perfect for me so right now, we're kind of putting the brakes on people. I've got stuff scheduled out more than a month already just to try and get that flow. She's doing a really good job.

Chris Goedecke:

I'm going to say, so more than likely, what's happened is word has gotten out that your podcast and, obviously, people are taking advantage of it if they can get on this show.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah!

Chris Goedecke:

Why not?

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah and so, that leaves us with the interesting dilemma of who. Who do we say yes to because I just like to say yes to everybody. To me, everybody's story is interesting and I've had this thought experiment yesterday. What if we added another episode and, just a feedback, when we added a Thursday episode, which isn't even as long as the interviews, people said great! Thank you but now I feel like I'm falling behind so to add another episode, I actually think we might lose people because people like to be able to check that box and say, I've completed this. I'm caught up.

Chris Goedecke:

And people are pretty overwhelmed today as far as information coming at them. I have trouble reading lengthy things. I'm an avid reader but there's only so much I can take in at any amount of time.

Jeremy Lesniak:



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Honestly, that's why I found podcasts and that's why I listen to so many podcasts and audiobooks because it gives me something that when I'm in the car, I can kind of zone out in a right way, in a safe way and I just take that stuff in that way so much better than pretty much any other format.

Chris Goedecke:

You have a really great opportunity now in the podcast that you can produce a series of books with the highlights of interesting content. Maybe not necessarily stories but particularly with technical, philosophical ideas that people would love to read about.

Jeremy Lesniak:

It's funny that you mentioned that.

Chris Goedecke:

I knew you'd be thinking about it.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah, it took some time. We used the show as an outline and went back and I pulled out the topics that I really liked and worked with one of our writers to construct the outline and now, we're going back through. I'm actually recording the audiobook first and then we're going to transcribe it and edit it.

Chris Goedecke:

Yeah, that's good. That's good. Really terrific.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Thanks, yeah! You've written a number of books and I know we'll talk about that and I look forward to it.

Chris Goedecke:

Yeah! I've got about 7 books out. I've been pretty busy myself. I've had an incredible run. I look at people who've lost their jobs and I'm still teaching Karate 7 days a week. I've been teaching nonstop, no breaks for 47 years now and I think I told you, I'm celebrating my 50th year in martial arts soon on December 12. I happen to remember the date I walked into my first dojo. My health is great and I hope to keep going. My wife said so, you're never going to retire and I said, no, I'm not. I haven't stopped doing the thing I loved doing although you might be hearing this but I'm pretty sure what's happening is something we can talk about is traditional arts have been receiving in the United States. They're not expanding. I'm hearing about so many schools that have such a small hierarchy of adult students. I'm not talking about the MMA schools. Some of the Jiu Jitsu schools are doing well but most of traditional people I talk to, they're struggling to fill their school with a lot of adults.



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Jeremy Lesniak:

I don't know that that's ever not been the case.

Chris Goedecke:

Yeah, I know. I've had huge classes. Almost with a lot of people.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Right, and there're still plenty of people who do and what I wonder, what we were talking about when we first started talking, this idea that people are so overwhelmed that if you're not good at standing out, at positioning what you do as something that is respite from the rest of the world, I think it's easy to get lost.

Chris Goedecke:

Yeah, I think you're right. I think when people come in they go, what?! How long to get a black belt? In my school, in 7 to 10 years. That's a long time but I'd rather see a high quality student than a lot of low quality black belts and I think a lot of the industry has had to bend to produce lower quality blackbelts just to keep going.

Jeremy Lesniak:

And I think...I've thought a lot about this but one of the things that's really interesting is, for me, that I get this opportunity to have similar conversations with people as they come on and they talk to me and so, we get to unpack some of these subjects in slightly different ways which gives me the privilege to hear other people's thoughts and kind of bounce it off different people and you know what I think it is? I think we did, and this is, I mean I can't take personal responsibilities before my time, but I think we, in the United States, put such an emphasis on that black belt truly on that people look at that as the end point.

Chris Goedecke:

I agree with you. In fact, the black belt used to be called by some organizations the 'coveted' black belt and now, because of the mass commercialization of martial arts, it's coveted for the people who are in a good system and are training hard. It seems less coveted by the general public or actually, the general public is split. I remember back in the '70s when kickboxing was really picking up as far, as the TV viewership was concerned, somebody high up in that said black belts are a dime a dozen today and I was disappointed in that comment because we turned out some great black belts and say, '60s, '70s, '80s and some schools are still doing it but a lot of schools are not. You can see the difference. You can see the degrade in performance in the average tournaments being held, say in the state of New Jersey, very different than what they used to be 20 years, 30 years ago. Now, I'm very pro-Karate. I think I just want to keep talking about the benefits of martial arts but I do find it more difficult. I don't see the clientele



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coming in the way they used to come in and, of course, we have more competition. There's a lot of different martial arts out there.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yes. One of the things I see, you mentioned in competition, there almost seems to be this intense stratification. You've got these utterly amazing black belts. If you look at point-sparring and what point-sparring has become on the competitive circuit if you were to remove the force of the '60s when a point required this brutal penetration through the ribs. If you were to take the skill of the top level point-sparring today and find a way to equate the rules, I think they would take those top-level point fighters from the '60s and '70s to task. They've become so much more athletic but I think the average point fighter from the '60s and '70s would wipe the floor with the average point fighter of today.

Chris Goedecke:

Yeah, I agree with that, sure.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I think we can say the same about forms. There seems that we've advanced, I think in a way, martial arts because of our better understanding and better teaching techniques and athletic training, things like that, but I think the overall standard has certainly regressed.

Chris Goedecke:

Yes, I think if you look at the ideal, if you look at the really terrific teachers, absolutely. We've advanced ourselves but the average instructor, most people who become teachers were never trained to be teachers and to take somebody to a very high level, if you're not really clear about your curriculum, it becomes difficult. Forms are my forte. That's what I feel I was drawn into martial arts for. I have a lot of things to say about forms. I think they were not well-interpreted. I don't think today, they're not fully understanding as well as they could be and I often ask myself, why is that when we've had so many people doing forms and I think it's because we don't have a lot of people doing forms for a long period of time where they really sink into it and get into the essence of the kata. From the last 25 years, I have been studying the Kiko side of traditional forms and, I could make a very radical statement here; that most people are probably not even doing their basics correctly and I think I could prove it if I had individuals here rather than, yeah, I could kick your butt on the mat. I said yes, but I can make you kick my butt even better on the mat.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Can you offer any examples for that?

Chris Goedecke:



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Somebody said why don't you put some of these up on YouTube and I said here's what's going to happen: I'm going to put it up on YouTube. It's not going to look real and people are going to say this crazy stuff. I'll give an example, a simple example. I have 2 advanced students. They've both been with me for 30 years, 30 years plus. One weighs about 240 pounds, the other is about 165 pounds. I have the heavier set person turn sideways and I asked the lighter person, can you push him out of a horse stance? Do anything you think you know to push him out of a horse stance. He can't do it. It's impossible. The guy is too solid except if you're pushing upwards and I don't give them that option because that's the way to uproot anybody out of a stance. Pushing straight can't do it. I said, alright, I'm going to show you two or three simple things you can do. Can you do it? We have it on videotape and BOOM! The guy goes flying out of the stance and, not only he goes flying out, he goes like 4 or 5 feet, not in the air, it's just he can't hold his posture. I said, that's the difference between Kiko technique and non-Kiko technique so we have the biomechanical side of martial arts and, what I call, the bioenergetic side of martial arts and that bioenergetic side was absolutely included in our katas. Particularly the central katas coming a lot in Okinawa [00:16:16] Japanese forms that I would say for sure with Chinese forms so that's been my focus of study for a long time and every person that I've brought in to that particular study, they rolled their eyeballs. They go, that can't be real. That's why we're introducing it. Amazing stuff!

Jeremy Lesniak:

I'm not familiar with that term: Kiko.

Chris Goedecke:

So, Kiko is an old world Okinawan term that would be synonymous with chi-gung. Alright? But in our case, we're talking about martial chi-gung which is a little different from the health chi-gung. With the health chi-gung, you're doing a set of exercises, maybe like a low Han series or the 8 pieces of brocade. Those will be the more popular ones. You're trying to open up the Meridian Channel flow so that you can say [00:17:08] or sedate different organs in the body, certainly, connect the body. Martial chi-gung, we're looking specifically to enhance physical strength or specific techniques. It works really well with grappling. Our school excels in standing grappling. We are a striking school but the advanced studies is with stand grappling and wrist techniques, arm bar techniques. All the common locks that you would put somebody in. We would use Kiko techniques to make those locks extremely difficult to apply on us or to be able to apply those locks with more force. In fact, I mean, it's so much force, it doesn't seem real. I don't think that a single black belt that I've introduced the concept to who hasn't had a look of what just happened? I've met a few people on my YouTube channel go Oh, this is not real. I say hey, you're invited here anytime you want to come. I'd be happy to show it to you.

Jeremy Lesniak:



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So, I'm going to guess that maybe, even though I'm not familiar with the term, you just said something that sparked a memory in me. I was once taught the ability to use, when I was growing, what some would say cat stance, tiger stance, diffuse wrist locks. Is that what you're talking about?

Chris Goedecke:

So, a cat stance...if we step away from martial arts as a typical Westerner and we look at a cat stance, we would go that's crazy. Who'd ever want to stand like that, right?

Jeremy Lesniak:

Right.

Chris Goedecke:

When you're in martial arts, it's a different story. I know, for me, it took years before I understood a cat stance, just a basic cat stance. Years! It was the last thing that I wanted to use when I was sparring because I'm very tall. I'm just shy of 6'4" but I only weigh 115 pounds and so, I would be working with guys who would be 220, 240 and I'm going to die. Now, assume I had 25 years, the cat stance, my opinion, was fundamental to traditional martial arts because it was understood that the cat stance created a significant energy draw off another person. There are certain fundamentals you have to do to do the cat stance correctly so you're partly correct. I mean, I have to see the technique that you're actually using but if you threw a strike at me, say your right hand strike, regardless of what stance we're drawing, and I were to deflect that strike with a left open hand in a cat stance with my right foot back, if I drew my left hand towards me, if I kept the left arm relaxed and if I did the cat stance correctly, I can show you that after that strike, your entire body is markedly weak for any type of hit and, particularly, a lock that's coming back at you. You wouldn't be able to hold a stance strongly. You won't be able to hold a lock on me as strongly and if I hit you it's going to hurt more. We've demonstrated this in thousands of tests with all kinds of people but if you tighten up your arm or if you don't have the right intention, because the mind is part of the interplay here with Kiko, you won't see anything and that's why it's difficult to explain this to somebody outside of an actual hands-on encounter because they may attempt to do the move and have no significant change and there could be variables that they don't understand that if I was in the room I could say, look, you don't have to do it with me. I don't have to be the one that's testing because you might feel I'm biased with it. You can do it with a friend so if your friend finds out that he's weaker, it's a pretty strong confirmation that there's something significant happening. I see this in the katas. We've been pulling the katas for 2 and a half decades and I challenge any of my students who are very headstrong to disprove that there isn't this phenomenon going on. If they want to try and prove to me that it's just the right angle, the right leveraging angle. They haven't been able to do it. There is definitely something that is happening that is outside of the main understanding of leveraging or timing with the technique. We use it in a lot of techniques. First, I have to get the people over the hurdle that it actually there is this phenomenon and we could call it like your



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moving ki or chi. Science has not figured out what ki or chi is. I'm not as interested in what it is. I'd love to know the science behind it but since the science isn't there and, there's not a lot of funding right now to investigate as deeply as we, martial artists would like to look, what we do see in the history of, say, the Chinese arts that were coming into Okinawa is an acute understanding of the behavior of this type of energy and that's what I've been focusing on. Somebody will come along and it's probably some quantum physicist and they'll be able to nail this down for us or have a much better grasp of the scientific fundamentals of it but for me, it's the behavior. If we can duplicate the behavior with the average martial artist and we have something really tangible that we can pass along to future practitioners, if we can't duplicate it, that's a whole different story. Sometimes we run into a wall where a test we try doesn't work and it's easy to say, well, maybe it's so subtle that nobody can really work it but we usually find out what the missing variable is and we bring it back in and it works perfectly again. It's like a typical martial arts technique. You ask somebody to perform, say, a sidekick. It's not easy for a beginner to perform a sidekick. It takes months. Round kicks, it takes months and months and months to get a really good quality round kick and when you get a kumite going, there's so much going on under kumite that it takes years to become good at kumite unless you're naturally strong. I mean, there's some people that will blast right in there but to really do it well and bring into all the techniques that you have available to you. For my students, as I've said, is about 7 to 10 years, but the average student that's with me is not training 6 days a week. They're only training a couple days a week so then, it takes much longer if you're training a shorter period of time.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I got to ask, how did you...were you exposed to this? This is not the typical path of a martial artist.

Chris Goedecke:

This is so non-typical that I reached out to some senior martial artists with as many years in the arts as myself and I asked them what they think about some articles that I've put out. I've been putting out articles for years and they say, wow! One individual who was pretty high-profile for quite a few years, studied martial arts 45+ years, said, listen, I've worked with a chi-gung master, health chi-gung, I've studied with some of the top Okinawan senseis and nobody's mentioned anything about this and I said, that's a shame because it's so fascinating and there's enough of us doing this, would you like to know about it and yeah, I'd love to know about it. Never contacted me again and I don't understand it so I can say it this way: I was taught by a first and a second-generation instructor of Okinawan Karate, specifically Isshin-ryū, and there was never any mention of chi or energy outside of general statements about this subject. I didn't really care about it. I think you're probably like most committed martial artists that if you're training hard, there is some kind of mysterious energy, you're probably going to tap into it whether your conscious or not. I think there's some terrific, intuitive experts out there and they're working with the principles but they might not be actually be able to voice the principle. They might not be able to articulate them in detail so I came about it purely by happenstance. I was in the art for about 23 years. I have a successful dojo, lots of students, lots of black belts and I was working privately with an



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older gentleman who was a former Navy Frogman before there were SEALs so he was a pretty together guy physically and we were working on basic wrist escapes, wrist lock escapes. During one of the wristlock escapes where he gripped me, we were just looking at nuances of some of the grappling moves. The things that would be staples in most, say Jiu Jitsu schools, he grabs me and I just get out of it like he wasn't paying attention. His name was Joe and I said, Joe, you got to hold me tighter and he goes, oh, I'm holding as tight as I could. No, you weren't. It felt like nothing and then he grabbed me again and I had trouble getting out of it just with gross strength and well, that was weird. What was that that just took place because you say you were holding tighter and I believed you. How is it possible that it felt like a hot knife through butter? So, we said, let's try to pursue this. See if we can do this again and I don't know if we could do it that day but we stayed out for a couple weeks and all of a sudden, we realized that there was something else going on here that was beyond leveraging, beyond timing, beyond strength and we got it up to the point where we could duplicate it with ourselves, we could bring in other individuals, we could bring in non-black belts, we could bring in lay people and they were all able to do it to some degree, some were better than others. We understood that if there's blockages in the physical energy system of the body like the Meridian system, even though you want to do it, your energy not going to be flowing in the kind of, let's say, volume that would give you this opportunity to...a hot knife through butter. We didn't realize that the whole body was involved. I mean, we know...anybody who's been studying martial arts for any number of years know that your physical expression is usually always stronger when the whole body is involved. It's not just an arm technique. It's not just a punch with an arm. It's a punch with a proper stance, with correct breathing, maybe momentum going in there so we had no idea that really staged that stance was involved. Breathing was involved. We got it up to the point where I can ask a student to try to prevent me escaping from the lock. We have an in-house language where when you're using the energy. We call it kaiten. You're directing chi to different parts of your body and acupuncturists would agree with us that we're directing energy to different parts of our body where they could hold me and, honestly, Jeremy, I could not budge. I could not move my arm. I could do plenty of other things but just raw strength, I was just frozen out. I showed a student once a single basic wrist technique. I asked them to pull out their strongest right hand for me to grab your wrist and slowly try and put you in a wristlock. Again, a very common, staple technique. We have some guys who are very strong. I have one guy that I could put him down, he's about 220, younger guy. I said okay, now you gate. You know how to gate? Not only can I not turn his wrist, he could take his hand, twist his wrist in the opposite direction and just hurl me right off of him. I was like man, I believe that the internal masters who understood this kept this pretty close to the cuff. They really didn't want this to get out. I also feel that older individuals, people 40s and above, might have had these old masters. They come here. Let's come into this room. I'm going to show you something that's going to maintain your energetic strength as your physical strength decreases as you age. I'd love for somebody to have done that to me. I wish I had a teacher that could teach this directly rather than just trial and error so I've been working on the energy formula now for about 25 years and we brought in some high Dan-ranked individuals from different styles who are following the work that we're doing. They're fascinated by it too. When you see the principles of the Kiko playing out in kata



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bunkai, you will most likely realize this is probably the essence of the art because to see it in action is just kind of awesome. Back in the 1970s or '80s, there was a U.S. contingent of Gōjū-ryū practitioners that went over to Okinawa to be trained by, at the time, the leading Gōjū-ryū Okinawan Master Masanobu Shinjo. He has since passed away and Shinjo, like the typical Okinawan, didn't stand very tall. He might have been about 5'4", maybe a 140, 50 pounds. He could outperform all of the U.S. 200+ pound weightlifters and wrestlers and Karateka that came in that contingency on all kinds of strength techniques. He said go ahead, you try it. They couldn't do it and we look at them and we say, how is that possible? But if you see the Kiko principles at play, you say, that's how it's possible. That's how it's possible so that's the most fascinating part of my study into something that I will continue to promote. You'll hear my voice out there more about this.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Good. This is really interesting stuff and I think I want to go back a bit, though, because what you're talking about now is not typical as we already discussed.

Chris Goedecke:

No, no, it's not.

Jeremy Lesniak:

So, I'd like the listeners to hear a bit about your origin story because I suspect it's far more similar to what the rest of us experienced and might help build some bridges.

Chris Goedecke:

Yeah, I'd love to tell that story! When I was a junior in high school, say I was 17 years old, and I'm thinking this is probably the fall of 1968. Now, martial arts really started to creep into United States in the mid-fifties so by the time we got to '60s, '62, '63, we were starting to hear the word Karate. You might attach it on television. I was watching a TV spy series. This is a series that ran from 1966 to 1968. It was called the Man from U.N.C.L.E. There were 2 protagonists and one of them was played by David McCallum and in this particular series, he got into a fight with a big Russian guy and he did a shuto. He did a chop to the back of the guy's neck and that was it. Fight was over. Now, his partner said, how did you beat that guy? He was one tough guy and the character, Illya Kuryakin, said Karate, ancient art of self-defense. I had never heard of anything like that. I've never seen anything like that. I was so intrigued by it that the next day, I went down to the local bookstore and I purchased a 95-cent copy of Bruce Tegner's book, How to Teach Yourself Karate, Judo, Kung Fu. I've since mentioned that to a number of people and they go Oh! I remember that book! Well, Bruce Tegner, who was born in 1925, went on to write 25 books and was really into the arts way before any of us were so I started teaching myself some of the basic techniques in my family's basement. I happen to have a sister who just happened to be dating a guy from the local Karate school one time over and she said, my brother's down there trying to



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teach himself Karate. Could you get him to your school? Yeah, sure! So, he comes to me and he says, would you like to come to my Karate dojo? It's over in the town of Summit, New Jersey. I said, I'd love to. I think the first class was free so I can tell you the date. I don't know, I'm not good with dates but that particular one I remember. December 12, 1968. I walked into what would become one of New Jersey's and historically, one of the pioneering dojos on the East Coast in the United States. We informally called it the Bank Street School. It was known at the time as the International School of Judo and Karate. It was founded by a judoka who was not a black belt at the time. He was a salesman and he was studying judo several times over. By the way, judo was practiced in those days, the early 1960s, with no tatami. Just on a wooden floor, full force throws. Now, he said, this could be something really interesting so he got a huge second floor studio, maybe it's 3500 square feet. He had special mats made and nobody had them doing anything like this before and I walked into that dojo. Tall, skinny, 17-year old. I saw somebody get up in a zenkutsu-dachi, a black belt, and threw a lunge punch that snapped in a way that you have...if you've never seen something like that in person, think back on the first time you ever saw somebody perform martial arts in a powerful way and I said I have to be able to do that. I studied at that school, by the time I was a brown belt, I was studying 6 hours every day in two 3-hour sessions and then, I'd come home and I'd stay up until midnight and I'll probably do about another hour before I went to bed. The Bank Street School turned out a lot of notable teachers so I was really fortunate. My first teacher was Robert Murphy. Robert Murphy studied with Tatsuo Shimabuku in Okinawa. He came back here. He was friends with Don Nagel. Don Nagel is considered the father of Isshin-ryū in New Jersey. Almost anybody who's lived in New Jersey and studied Karate, studied Isshin-ryū in particular, you probably trace your origin back to him. Bob Murphy was a very refined individual. He was extremely articulate about the art. He's a great first experience for me. I had the odd phenomenon of teachers leaving the school rather than the student, like myself, leaving the school and different teachers coming in so my first introduction to Karate was Bob Murphy's Isshin Shorinji Ryu Okinawan technique. This was a style that he created that came out of his Shōrin-ryū studies and his Isshin-ryū studies. For those who don't know about Isshin-ryū, Isshin-ryū was created by Tatsuo Shimabuku in the mid-1950s. Shimabuku was an established Shōrin-ryū Karate master who began to add to or expand his system claiming a new title for it in 1955. He lost some of his Okinawan students but he did have a very strong connection with the military base there which led to the popularity here on the East Coast, particularly in New Jersey, a lot of Isshin-ryū here. Bob Murphy left the Bank Street dojo to open up a school several towns away and I was unable to get there, you know, transportation. So, I stayed and one of his senior students, a man named Frank [00:38:45] took over. I think Frank [00:38:48] at that time was a 4th or 5th Dan and then, eventually, Frank [00:38:52] left and my third and most instrumental instructor, a controversial character named William Scott Russell or Scott Russell, he came here and I liked the way he talked about martial arts. It's a little different then, the way the art was being presented in the States in the early '60s and I want to say something about the Bank Street School. So, the Bank Street School started as a judo school. It opened up in 1962. It was about a 3500-square foot studio and we had 3 training levels. In one room there was a raised mat, there was a lower matted area and there was a whole another large room connected to it. In 1965, this is 3 years before I started, people began to ask the owner of the school,



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Allen Good, if he taught Karate there and Allen got so many requests that he decided to open it up, found a Karate instructor, the instructor's name was Edward Doyle. Edward Doyle, I believe, was the first teacher of Karate at the Bank Street School in 1965. It was an instant success. 250 students signed up and I came in later so, you know that Karate really took off in the, say, mid to late-'60s and '70s. I mean, it just exploded. Everybody wanted to do it and so, I came in a little bit earlier than that explosion. In '68, you could still knock on doors in suburban New Jersey and you could say, have you ever heard of the term Karate? Most people would not have heard of it. Judo, yes, maybe but definitely not Karate. Now, Scott Russell apparently had some boxing training and it was his boxing training that made him look at the way Karate was being taught that to him, was a little bit too stifling and his feeling and his expression back to us was I think the katas are too stiff. This isn't the way I would fight as a boxer. I think they have been under-interpreted and that really stuck with me and we used to drill kata for hours. The Isshin-ryū syllabus would have seisan katas, wansu, neihanchi, chinto, kusanaku, sanchin, which you find in many different Okinawan styles. We used to do the katas but we didn't have a lot of bunkai. We didn't have a lot of the interpretation of the forms. We did shobus, we did some pre-range kumite where the opponents give an attack, you're given a defense and you're drilled that over and over and over again. It wasn't until many years later in my career that I said, I need to revisit these katas. Why don't these katas have bunkai throughout? Now, we have the work of people like Nathan Johns and Ian Abernathy over in England saying hey, our katas have way more technique, way more sophisticated technique or Xavier Martinez saying look, there's a lot of pressure point work in these forms so they were kind of filling out the missing gaps in some of the kata. I'm coming along much later and I'm saying, yeah, you guys, this is great. I totally agree with you but you're all missing the Kiko side of it. We need to bring the Kiko side into it so when we get an adult student that goes, what is this Karate dance? This kata? I want to do fighting. I said no, no. You have to understand that kata contains the most essential principles of fighting on dimensions ago, West still doesn't comprehend and it shouldn't be this disconnect where kata seems oddly different from kumite. Somebody once said, if you, Karate people, feel that your katas are so important, how come your kumite, your sparring, never looks like kata? It was a great statement and a good challenge and we've put that gap back in. We do describe to people and say, your listeners, that Karate kumite in most dojos is practiced fighting. It's practiced fighting. It is not the essence of the killing art. To do that, you'd probably have to injure your opponent. You can take in, you can notch it up but the liabilities today are much higher so when somebody comes to me and they say, I want to fight. I go, okay, well, first of all, you need some tools but you understand that if you want to fight, there is that problem of getting injured. Here's a funny story. A student of mine that says, he's a Romanian fella, he's pretty stocky and he says to me, Shifu, I think I need to know what it feels like to be hit and I said Andrei, I can tell you right now, it doesn't feel good and he goes no, I think I need to know. I said okay, I'll be happy to hit you. I said look, I won't even hit you that hard and I hit him and he says well, I don't like that. I said no, wait, I practice Karate so I won't be hit. I don't want to be hit and there are people who actually don't mind being hit as long as they're not damaged. I think the mainstream practitioner doesn't want to be hit. I think the competitor knows that that's part of the competitive experience; you're going to get hit and if you want to toughen yourself up for that, that's fine but the



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average person that I deal with doesn't want to be injured and I teach a lot of professional people. They can't...you can't go back to work as a lawyer and sit down with clients and have a black eye and sprained fingers and things like that. It's interesting how the society shapes the art as well. I know that there's very few people that practice the kata with Kiko principles because I'm trying to find them out there but that doesn't mean that they don't hold a great deal of value. I also know that the average martial artist in the United States is not spending more than 2 and a half years in their discipline. When you talk about somebody that's been in the art 50 years, talking about a very thin population, we're not talking about [00:45:36] 50 years where you did it 20 years ago and you're still interested and you read books on it. Those practitioners are out there teaching every day, like myself, we cover a lot of ground. I think if I had stopped at the 20-year mark or the 25-year mark, I wouldn't be talking to you about Kiko at all and I would've been very happy with what I have accomplished. So, I stayed at the Bank Street School. I earned my black belt and I was asked to teach. It came when I graduated college which, for me, couldn't come at a better time. I got my black belt in 1971. In 1973, I graduated a degree in business from Fairfield University up in Connecticut and the group I trained with said, look, we're going to open up another studio in another town. It's going to be a 5,000-square foot studio which is quite large. We'd like you to run it. I said oh man, I would love to do that and so, I professionally taught quite a few years with that group and then, that group fell apart. It's such a shame when you have a good school and the head of the school ends up having an addiction that he can't control and this happened with this school. I always felt that Scott Russell was a terrific teacher for me but he couldn't hold the organization together and I left and I began to teach on my own, went around to a lot of civic institutions at a time when workshops and seminars were not really trending. I mean, they are today but if you go back to the '70s, they wanted all. For example, I went to Drew University and we have 3 universities around where I live and I said, listen, I'd love to do a Karate program if you're interested and they said, well, we have one on right now and I said, oh really? Who's teaching it? And it turned out to be my former, my first teacher, Bob Murphy. They said but if he ever leaves, we'll give you a call but Bob retired that year and they called me and I've been teaching a credit Karate program at Drew University for 35 years now, every semester. It's been fabulous so many of the civic programs that I've started are still packed with students so when people say, do you have a dojo? I have a private studio but I say, no, I don't really have a dojo but I have a following. At the peak of my teaching, I was teaching, along with my staff, 450 students a week. Just to give you an idea of the number of people there. I have quite a few black belts who've been with me, easily, for over 20 years and some for 30, 35 years. I've watched them go from teenagers to literally captains of industries. It's been very, very exciting. In fact, I've had one student where I've taught three generations of his family. I'm kind of dating myself a little bit but I go like wow! I've taught guys who became blackbelts who aren't married who got married because they fell in love with a woman in my class and had kids and now, their kids are black belts with me. So, I've seen a lot. I've seen an awful lot and we tried out a lot of things. So, that was my beginning. The Bank Street school actually burned down, I think it was 1984. It was the end of a really amazing era because there were significant people that came out of that school. Not only significant in the Karate arts but they got involved in the other arts. One became notable in Hung Ga, Chinese Tiger Claw. Another one went over



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to China and studied acupuncture over there and did Arnis and Eskrima and became an international champion of that and came back in the States for books on that subject so I'm very happy that I started at that school. Lots of people, in fact, in the 1970s, we had one thousand students enrolled in one year. They didn't all enroll in one year but that one year timeframe, we had 1,000 active students. That's huge! It's very hard to create that today. I mean, I understand from a former student of mine and he's currently studying in Manhattan with the Gracies was telling me it's a phenomenal program that they have. They have 1400 students at any one day, there's 700 practicing students there so we do have some very successful schools out there.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Let's talk about your books. Let's shift gears a little bit because you had mentioned with the top of our conversation and you know what? We should probably do something that we neglected to do since there's been a bit of the pause in the conversation. I kind of called an audible. Once in a while, we'll do this but generally, I'll talk with the guest for a few minutes, make sure the technology's working and we'll kind of pause and then we'll introduce them and then we'll take off any of that from part but we didn't do that because we just got going.

Chris Goedecke:

Yeah, we did!

Jeremy Lesniak:

And I didn't want to break that flow.

Chris Goedecke:

That's okay, I can get back into it pretty easily.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Well, I'm not as good as you are then because I can get back into it but it takes a little bit of time and I felt like it warranted just kind of letting you go and I was continuing on the path that we were on.

Chris Goedecke:

I get it. Go for it! Let's do the intro.

Jeremy Lesniak:

But when I record the intro later, when we're done, I'm going to introduce you by name and we had talked a little bit via email that your name and your title, there's a little bit of a story there too so maybe we can explain that so the listeners, we do it all justice.



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Chris Goedecke:

Yeah, I'm good with it. So, you're going to do the intro and I'll just...

Jeremy Lesniak:

No, I'd rather explain because if we were...if this was a standard conversation, it wouldn't even be a conversation. I would've introduced you at the top and said Shifu Chris Goedecke if I'm saying correctly.

Chris Goedecke:

Uh, Goedecke. You're close.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Almost there.

Chris Goedecke:

That's right.

Jeremy Lesniak:

But you would let me know via email that that's not the name that you go by when you're really talking about martial arts stuff. Maybe you can explain that and tell us how that came about.

Chris Goedecke:

Okay, so...in the year 2000, I picked up a book called The Bodhisattva Warrior. It was the evolution of Buddhism through the martial art culture of china and japan. There was, in the appendix of that, a very bold statement made by the author, who went by the Buddhist name, Nagaboshi Tomio. That statement was: no martial artist in Okinawa ever studied Sanchin long enough to get it's essence. Something like that. I'm kind of putting my own spin on it. I said wow, that's powerful statement. I've been doing sanchin kata for, I don't know, at that point, maybe 35 years so I'm going to write this individual and I did and he wrote me back and he said, I would love to answer that question for you. I've been speaking with masters from both Asia and from the West, however, I'm going to turn the question over to my U.S. representative Arakawa Tomio. I got to know Arakawa. I didn't know what to expect from the organization. We ended up having a terrific relationship. We talked about all the different variations of sanchin katas that are out there and he invited me into the organization that was headed by Nagaboshi. Nagaboshi's organization is the Mushindo Kempo Association of Great Britain. I said no, I wasn't really interested in joining other organizations. My plate was pretty full but he insisted and I realized that this would be a benefit to me because, if you've been doing martial arts for a very long time, it's impossible not to cross into the mental side of it. I mean, you could be in the mental side of it right in the beginning but, I mean, really sink in to the mental side of it and the Buddhist position in martial arts is if you don't understand the nature of your mind, you'll never fully understand the essence of your expression of



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martial arts and I believe that because I have already crossed into that territory. I became ordained Buddhist monk, not a priest, I became an ordained Buddhist monk and one day, I received a packet in the mail addressed to a one Hayashi Tomio and I thought, oh, Arakawa Tomio must have sent this to the wrong person because my name is Chris Goedecke. I opened it up because I figured I better just check and see what it is and here was some official documents that I was now being named, my temple name was to be, Hayashi Tomio as an ordained monk. I have to tell you, I instantly connected to the name. I don't know why. I contacted Arakawa and I said, so what's up? He said well, Nagaboshi and I decided this would be your name. We gave it a lot of thought and I said, what does it mean? He said well, Hayashi means forest or, in your case because you're so tall, tall forest and Tomio means seeking the light. Tall forest seeking the light became my temple name. I love it! I decided this will be my martial name so when I'm dealing with my non-martial friends and business associates, I go by the name Chris Goedecke. When I'm dealing with martial arts, and I've started to do this with my books also, you'll see books with both names out there but all future books will be under the Tomio name. I have a quick funny story for you so I speak with somebody in Hungary every Tuesday and we got connected because this person, at that time living in England, had a dream! Had a dream that she should be doing martial arts. It was so powerful she actually signed up in a dojo in England within the next couple of days and she decided she wanted to read some martial art books but she only wanted to read books that came out of Asia so she found this Asian fellow, Hayashi Tomio, who had written a book, my first book was called *The Soul Polisher's Apprentice* and she started reading and then she realized, wait a minute, this guy isn't from Asia but it was too late. She was too much into the book and I really resonated with her and we had become friends. We've been talking for like 4 years now so that name resonates with me. It obviously resonates with other people and we're to go by that name martially. I'm not...people say what shall I call you in the dojo? I do believe in formality. We have some in the dojo but there's natural respect and then there's kind of imposed protocol. I have a natural respect for my students. I give the same back to them. I've been called Shifu, I've been called Sensei, I've been called Hayashi, I've been called Chris. I just prefer to be called Hayashi or Shifu. That works really well for me. I like the relevance of the art to create the bedrock for the respect that people have so we get this genuine, authentic, we're all here together and that's, to me, where real respect comes from the training and the teachers and the students.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Now, there are plenty of guests who have been on the show where I would not have pointed out, what some may look at, as a discrepancy but everything you've said today, tells me that there is a, likely, very good answer. It's very intentional so we've talked about Karate. You've used Japanese terms. I mean you threw out zenkutsu-dachi as if you've used that term for a very long time.

Chris Goedecke:

I have.



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Jeremy Lesniak:

Okay, I have no tell but now, the title of Shifu, which of course is a Chinese term.

Chris Goedecke:

This is good. I'm glad you brought that up because I always recognized the title of Shifu and my understanding was probably similar to yours. Shifu is synonymous with sensei, right? One is the Chinese term and one is the Japanese term.

Jeremy Lesniak:

That's how I've seen it, yes.

Chris Goedecke:

Exactly! I was corrected by Arakawa Tomio. Arakawa Tomio's a good friend of mine. He's a 7th Dan in Aikibudo. He is the current head of the Mushindo Kempo Association or, what we now refer to as the Wushindao Association, he trained formally in Japan. He brought his Japanese teacher back and took care of that teacher until the end of his life. That teacher and his family and he said to me, if you go back in early Japanese martial titles, Shifu and Sensei were two different titles. Sensei referred to an individual who could teach the Jitsu, the physical technique of the art. Shifu was somebody who could teach spiritual principles along with the technical. I didn't know that either and that resonates really well with me also. We do have a lot of excellent technicians and technical teachers. We don't have as many spiritual teachers out there.

Jeremy Lesniak:

And I can see some logic for the inclusion of that title. Anyone that knows anything about Japanese and the language knows that there's a substantial amount of Chinese characters incorporated in the Japanese so it's not as if it's without precedent.

Chris Goedecke:

All of my early training was in Japanese but as the years went by, it started to give way more to the English language. I think there are some things, for example Kiko, would not be something that Western language, the Western English language, would have an easy equivalent because when we talk about spirit, we're getting into a very ambiguous dimension of martial arts. I would say, for a lot of people that I talk with, I sometimes like to substitute the word ki or spirit for like quantum physics, the invisible world we know. This is not a debatable thing. Science knows that we have waves called electromagnetic frequencies, both coursing through the body and outside the body. What martial artists don't particularly know is that those frequencies can be manipulated by both physical posturing and mental intention to the point of actually creating a phenomenon of increased strength in yourself or decreased strength in your partner so there are words that you'd want to preserve in the Japanese language that



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would need to be broken down further. Actually, this might help you. There's something that we do that's kind of unique in our school. Everybody knows that most traditional schools have kumite and there can be different degrees of intensity of kumite. Jiyu-kumite would be anything goes, get out there and the western term would be sparring and some schools allow for certain levels of contact. You have no contact, semi-contact, full contact. Kyokushin practitioner would go for full contact to any part of the torso. We have something called conceptual kumite and what conceptual kumite is you get a partner to stand down on the floor with you and I pick a concept and you both try to crunch down that concept the best way you know. For example, let's say, Jeremy, I say, please step out with this student named Scott, you're both advanced martial artists, I want you two to have a conversation for the next 5 minutes about power. You share what you know about power, he'll share what he knows about power, it's not about you condescending to him or him condescending to you, what can two of you build with this kinds of power? Because I can tell you that a lot of men that come into martial arts, not having any background in athletics, most likely do not have a mature grasp of what real power is. It's not what I thought of as a kid. Probably the best example is when you ask a man to be strong, my teacher once did this, he stepped out of the mat and said, alright, everybody, be strong. What was he talking about? What does he want? So, we did. We all tend to stop and we're going to feel our strength. If you taught martial arts, you know that one of the things you encounter with new students is with bodies that are too tense. If you could get into the headspace of the person and say why are you so tense? They probably, some, would probably admit, well, because if I can feel my own strength, I must be strong. No, no. If you can feel your own strength, you must be tight, in some cases. I always say it's not what it feels like to you, it's what it feels like to the opponent. Let the opponent be the definer of your strength because if you hit somebody and they go down, they're going to jump up and say, oh my god, that was an incredible hit. My teacher, Scott Russell, used to do what we call the slow punch. This would be on par with Bruce Lee's one inch punch so, one day, Scott Russell, now, he was about 6'2", 185 pounds, he steps onto the mat. We're well-conditioned martial artists. We all train hard every day and he says, everybody, I'm going to demonstrate a punch to you. Tell me what you think about it's impact. Now, my teacher was very fast and I was waiting to see something kind of fun like that. He turned sideways and, matter of factly, he puts out the slow punch, a vertical punch, not a full twist punch. So, I'm thinking to myself, yeah, it's like nothing. He said, what did everybody think? Uh, you look relaxed. He walks up to each person. He goes, tighten up your abdomen. BOOM! To this day, now, we're talking like 45 years later, I can still recall my abdominal wall separating. He punched somebody at the top of the head, he go oh my god, any harder, my skull would crack so I tried to duplicate that. It took me some years. Alright, so now, I do the slow punch. Now, I'm not proud of this story but, I have to tell you, when you're hit by a professional, it's nothing like being hit by an amateur. You think the top 5 boxers in the world, when they hit the average person, they will kill them in one punch? You take someone like Bruce Lee, of course, why was Bruce Lee's one-inch punch so amazing? Because Western mind didn't understand if you punch with the whole body, he wasn't just punching with his arm because he wouldn't be able to move anybody. He knew how to channel that and I'm talking, by the way, purely biomechanically. I don't think Bruce Lee was into the energy work at all. I've heard many discussions about that. They were a



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little too young and a little too brash and they needed him to simmer down so, what I remember, Bruce Lee hits you, it's the biomechanics of pushing through the legs, through the torso, through the hips, into the chest and shoulders that sends somebody flying backwards. The slow punch is a little bit different. It is a totally uninhibited, relaxed, properly executed technique. I have a guy, comes in for a private lesson. He's about 6'4", 185 pounds, has a physical job, a very strong guy. He ended the session, I say, you know, when Karate technique is done correctly, it's immensely powerful. I'd like to demonstrate to you what we call the slow punch. I'm not going to hit you in your solar plexus. I'm going to hit you in the chest and I walked up to him and I feel his chest, he got a pretty solid chest and I said, I'm going to show you the punch first. I'm not going to even try to concentrate on the 2 knuckles because that's going to be a little more painful. I'm just going to hit with the flat of my hand and I hit him. He doesn't say anything. He looks concerned. I said, are you okay? This wasn't a trick. I wasn't trying to pull the wool over your eyes and go fast. I didn't go fast. He goes no, no, no. He goes, that was amazing. Really? Wow! That really hit me and he leaves. On his way home, he says, something's wrong. I need to go to the hospital. He goes to the hospital. I have separated all of the cartilage away from his sternum. He's out of work for 2 weeks. I felt horrible! I never intended anything like that. He loved that punch so much, he stayed with me for years. He goes, I got to be able to do that. He could've gone bad. I've since toned down the slow punch and it's not...I know that there's martial artists out there that have wickedly powerful technique. We had a Mamoru Shimamoto back in the early '60s and '70s, in the United States, in New Jersey, we have 2 of the highest ranked judoka in the country. We had Yoshitari Yunasuka who was Olympic, I think it was gold medal, judo champion and we had Masanobu Shinjo who was all-Japan champion. These are extraordinary titles for people to have so I invited Masanobu Shinjo to come in to my dojo to demonstrate the chokes and throws. Oh my god! This guy could put chokes on you like you wouldn't believe. He was like a hydraulic machine so when you get to a certain level of technique, it is beyond the comprehension of the average person as to how much power you can generate for the look of the technique. In fact, sometimes technique didn't look all that strong and you get hit by it and you realize it's extraordinary.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I'm curious. This is all good and I want to start to move towards the ending here because I've got a feeling you and I could talk all day.

Chris Goedecke:

We could.

Jeremy Lesniak:

This has been great and the fact that you're not terribly far makes me think we will likely meet.

Chris Goedecke:



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Absolutely, I'd be happy to come back and/or meet.

Jeremy Lesniak:

But, interestingly and almost counter to so many of the episodes that we've done lately, we've been talking about forms and I use the generic terms out of respect to folks who may be taekwondo practitioners. I grew up in Karate. I think of them in my brain as kata but I translate when I speak but there is this resistance to forms at this time by many.

Chris Goedecke:

Yeah, I so see this and it's really frustrating!

Jeremy Lesniak:

I'm curious so, we talked a lot about, what I would call as this incredibly high level understanding and practice of forms but I suspect that you can draw some connections, some justification for practicing forms that are relevant long before you reach that point and I'm wondering if you might speak to that.

Chris Goedecke:

Okay, there is a very popular form that has been taught in Okinawan and Japanese martial arts. They're sometimes referred to by the Japanese as Taikyokus. They're more generically referred to as the I or H-pattern forms, right? There's Pinan. So, these are forms in which you're, basically, you're tracing an embusen, that line of movement on the floor you're moving to the left and turning around and moving to the left again. Let's see if I can unravel this in kind of a simple way. I had an individual who is a very physical man. He was a West Point graduate. He was a Marine. He was a long-distance runner and it was at that time when I was re-evaluating because I have in my system a simple Taikyoku, the I or H-pattern, and I said, I need to look at this pattern from a practical standpoint and everybody who I talked to says, it's a basic kata or it's a pre-kata because it's so simple. I think everybody would identify with this, you bow, you turn to the left, maybe you do a step, maybe a bone-edge low block, step forward and full punch, you go the other direction and so on, until you've covered the whole I-form. At the time I had this student, I was investigating this form. I said there has to be something more to it than that. I get that it's a basic form but if you really look at it, it actually is quite mysterious because there's twice as many low blocks, there's only one middle block on one side, not both sides so it's not balanced. There's this huge three-quarter turn which nobody who's done any fighting would ever want to do, so I went, I put my mind into it and I put my mind to within and this went on for months trying to understand this and then, I, over time, for me, I figured it out. I said, this is amazing! This is exactly what I think the essence of kata is about from the practical standpoint and it goes something like this and I told this to that individual because I said this is the kind of man that will really appreciate it and here's what I'm going to say about kata, in general. Katas were not just a random collection of cool, self-defense technique. Katas were tactical treatises. These Okinawan masters were just like we are today. We need



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simple, direct tools to deal with, for example, a violent encounter. You don't want 500 techniques. You don't want 25 kicks and 35 different hand techniques and 50 escapes. That is not typical of the average person in martial arts. Almost every pinan, Taikyoku, I-form or H-form starts off this way. You're facing one direction. You turn to the left, you do your movements. You turn all the way around, you do your movements. You turn to the left again. Why were those particular directions taught in that manner? Now, most people would say you want to be able to train both sides. You go left first then you got the opposite side and then you go back to left and you just keep balancing everything out. I said no, that is not the reason why. There was a tactical reason why. You're going to like this, Jeremy. So, the tactical reason is this: in almost every case where you might be assaulted or in a fight with somebody, the Okinawan masters wanted you to go left first. The left diagonal, 45 degrees. If you couldn't go to the left, they wanted you to go to the right diagonal, 45 degrees. Failing to do left to right, you're forced to take somebody head-on which you know exposes all your vital targets and his. They were going to teach you how to go straight ahead and resolve the situation, not with a block or a punch, but with a Kiko-principled grappling move that...there were strikes, there were strikes...grappling move. Going to the left diagonal from a Kiko standpoint, and you'll notice many major katas start going to the left diagonal, and those that don't, the principles are intact. They're showing you how you do it to the right so if you and I were standing straight ahead, you decided you just step in and throw any kind of punch at my head, if you throw a hook, I have to go straight in. I can't go diagonal because the hook connect but any other straight move, whether you're trying to grab me, push me, punch me, kick me, I'm going to cut you left diagonal. They wanted you to have the simplest possible tactic. You will instantly reduce, not only their ability to throw the second punch because you're outside of that, they have to throw down their body, they can't change momentum with a kick, you're in a perfect position to strike because you used your non-dominant arm to strike with your dominant arm, that's what they wanted and I think, if I could speak for Okinawan masters, I'd say something like this: We want to keep it simple for you. The fewer choices you have, the better the opportunity you'll have to be successful. Too many choices is going to gum up the machinery. We're just going to give you some simple, simple choices. That is your introduction to kata. I don't think most people have ever thought about it that way.

Jeremy Lesniak:

I haven't.

Chris Goedecke:

I really have not had anybody who thinks of the Pinans that way. I have gone deep into the study of the kata and I am excited by what I'm finding. It's just funny that it's taken me that long because I didn't have those practical principles when I started as a teenager. Now, I do and I could talk about some of the other katas. We actually don't need a lot of katas. We just need a better understanding of the katas and I think, in some ways, we kind of miss the boat about the katas. We have a fantastic athletic performances, we have somewhat random applications. I want to see more of the tactical side of katas come out and that's going to take a little bit of work to get people who have those katas to see it this



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way because when you're comfortable teaching for 20 years, you don't necessarily want to follow and change everything up. That's a lot to do.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Yeah. If people want to find you online, Let's talk about that. Websites, social media, any of that?

Chris Goedecke:

I just actually launched a new website. They can find me at <https://isshinkempo.com> or you can look up The Wind School but isshinkempo.com will bring you there. I've got articles there, free articles you can read. I just launched a big 27-page article on Neihanchi kata, kind of talking about what we are, the tactical side of it and how most martial artists are missing that side of it and I think it will revitalize, not only revitalize kata, I want to be part of kata revitalization, but also make it interesting why we do katas because we find them intriguing. There's something mysterious about them but there's treasures in them so anyway, isshinkempo.com. People can email me. I love to talk to people. They can call me up. I like to get into it, hear what listeners are doing, particularly in regards to forms like this. My style is called Isshin Kempo. Scott Russell founded Isshin Kempo in the 1970s. He passed away, I took over successorship. We do all the Isshin-ryū kata in the Isshin Kempo system but we interpret them with the Kiko principles so we're not quite mainstream Isshin-ryū but I a very favorable to all styles. I don't believe in one style better than another style. I like to see all the martial arts to go indefinitely in this country because they are so phenomenal in what they offer for everybody. I've certainly grown tremendously as a result of my martial art experience. I've seen students grow tremendously. It's not for lack of value if we see the arts receding in certain dimensions. Maybe that just is a challenge for us to become better teachers of it so we can really grab you and the things you're looking for if you like to be a physical person or for just self-defense or competitive outlet. So, that's my story. Well, the beginning of my story.

Jeremy Lesniak:

And where can we find the books? Are those in your website too?

Chris Goedecke:

All the books that I have, I've got a book called Rebel Isshin-ryū. I went out on a limb on that one. Rebel Isshin-ryū, the 57 challenges. I have 57 challenges to the Isshin-ryū community about technique. I'm not challenging individuals. I'm challenging technique. Let's really look at what we've got. We've got a lot more dimension in those techniques. All my books are available on Amazon. You can go to the website, it will take you right to Amazon. I've got a book on internal Karate which is kind of a primer for people that don't know anything about the internal side. I hope to write a book on Kiko. I will be putting together a training video for MASTERS Magazine. We've started shooting it now. It's going to be on Neihanchi Kiko on the Chi-gung side of Neihanchi practice with a lot of practical tactics in the form. I



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happen to like writing kids' books. I have a fun little book if you have a young child called The Unbreakable Board and The Red Dragon Surprise. I teach a lot of kids. They're always asking me to tell stories so I either make them up on the spot, in this case, I wrote one so they could have a fun story that they could read. Yeah, I'm very active. I'm going to continue to go. I feel very strong about the art. My trajectory is still very strong so, more to come from me.

Jeremy Lesniak:

Awesome and as we start to wind down here, I guess we are winding down, I always ask the guest to send us off kind of in this high note, this nugget of wisdom and so, what would you offer up as your parting words to the people listening?

Chris Goedecke:

I would say don't get frustrated. Talk to your teachers if you hit a wall and if the wall is your teacher, reach outside. Somebody once lost their mentor and they were already a 6th or 7th Dan and this person just called me up out of the blue and he had no teacher in this kind of way and he is very knowledgeable and I was happy to speak with him. His jaw dropped, he told me later, he goes, I talked to people and nobody wants to talk. I said no, it should be the opposite. All of us who are professionals, we need to get out there and perpetuate that which is exciting for us, that which was exciting for us to anybody that wants to learn so my feeling is these arts are incredible. There are more than you could imagine so get out there and push through any obstacles that you're finding because you will find a lot of treasure. Keep going!

Jeremy Lesniak:

It can be difficult to look at the martial arts in a different way whether difficult because, intellectually or physically, it's hard to do or because there's pressure to not do so. I'm sure that's something that many of us have experienced. It's, certainly, something I've experienced and I'm sure Shifu can relate to that as well which is why I appreciate him being so open and so honest with what he's discovered, with what he's learned through his time training and teaching and I felt honored that he was willing to do so on this show so, thank you so much, Sir. I appreciate your time and your willingness to share with everyone. If you want to find the transcript, the show notes, video, link, photo, you name it, head on over to whistlekickmartialartsradio.com. This is Episode 412. While you're there, maybe sign up for the newsletter, check out some other episodes, maybe share an episode or two with some friends. Help us grow the show. The more we grow, the more we're able to do. Maybe stop by whistlekick.com, see everything that we've got going on. We've rolled out some new products recently. In fact, we're always rolling out new products, whether those be new apparel, new protective equipment, accessories, there's a bunch of stuff going on. You should probably check out, I'd say, every other week to stay on top what's happening. If you use the code `PODCAST15`, anything you buy is 15% off. Now, whether you're supporting us through a purchase or maybe sharing an episode, leaving us a review somewhere,



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we appreciate all of it. Thank you for all the support that you have shown us and the show continues to grow because of it so thanks for doing your part. If you want to find us on social media, we're @whistlekick. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram are our main channels and my personal email address: jeremy@whistlekick.com, would love to hear your feedback. Until next time, train hard, smile and have a great day!