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Programming with a martial art principles

Paolo Insogna

Node.js TSC, Principal Engineer @ **Platformatic**

There is no knowledge that is not power!



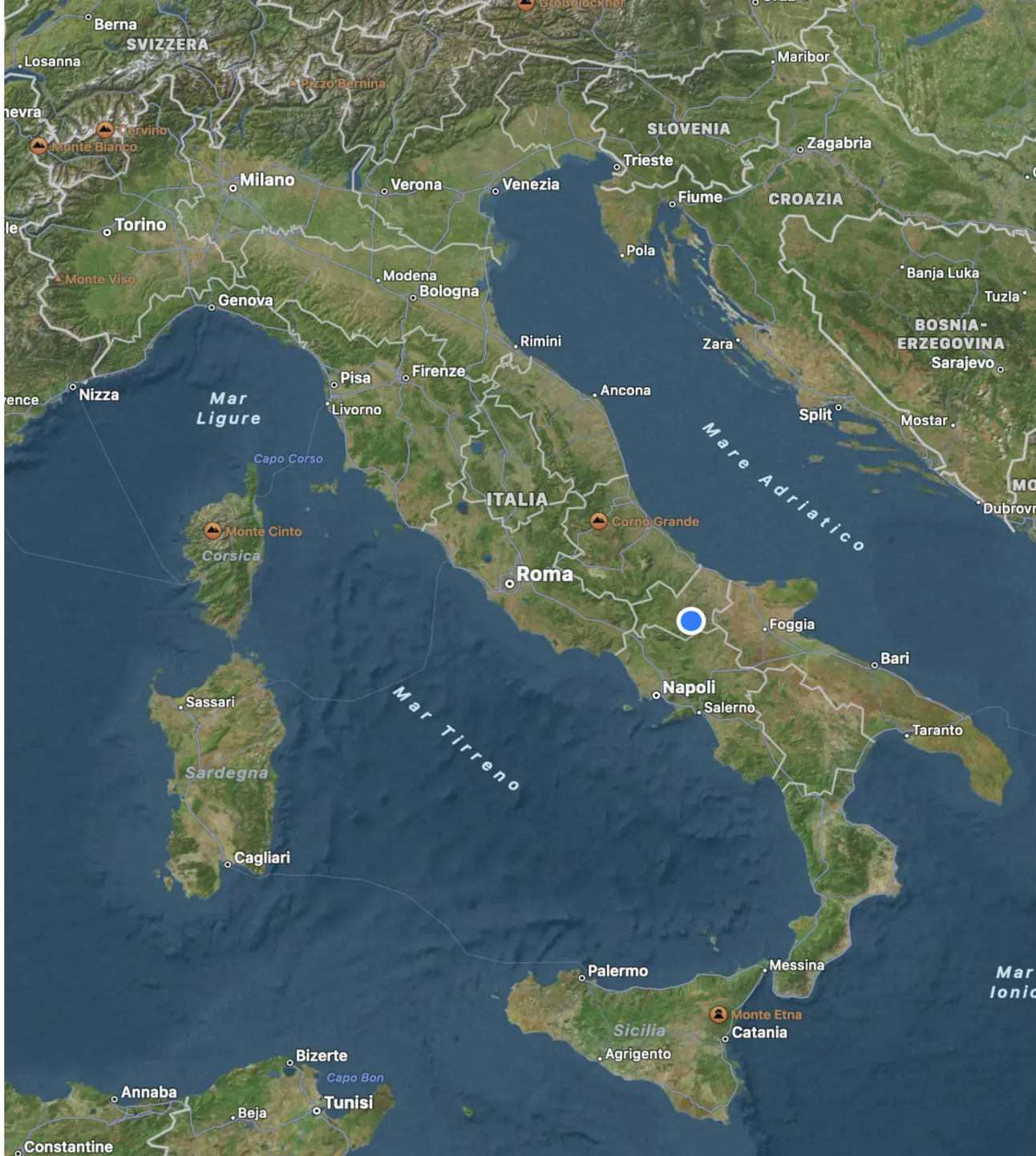
Hello, I'm **Paolo**!



Node.js Technical Steering Committee Member

Platformatic Principal Engineer

`paoloinsogna.dev` `ShogunPanda` `p_insogna` `pinsogna`



What is programming?



What is programming?

“The process of writing and testing programs for computers”

The Oxford Dictionary

What is a martial art?



What is programming?

“A traditional form of fighting or defending yourself, practised as a sport or as exercise.”

The Cambridge Dictionary

But they are completely unrelated!



It's all about us ...



Everybody is a multitude of traits

For instance, we are programmers, spouses or parents.



The different traits are not disjoint

They all influence the other ones.



The process is not voluntary

No matter how much you try, all the traits define you.

... and our brain, in particular



Everything you learn is useful

New brain connections are literally created every second.



You don't fully control your brain ...

Do not think about an elephant. **You have lost!**



... and that is a good thing

How many times your subconcious solved the problem?



Take me, for instance

I have several passions (1/2)



(Chubby) Cats
Those furry balls have seriously messed with my mind.



(Played) Soccer
Pretty obvious for a '84 Italian male. **Boring!**



Manga & Animes
It's easy to be an otaku now. Try in 2000's Southern Italy.

I have several passions (2/2)



Videogames

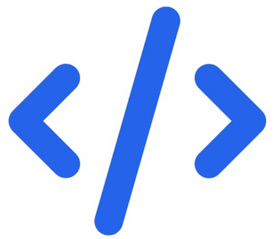
Since I was 6, as many developers.

Boring, again!



RPG & LARP

I started them late and they also seriously messed with my mind.



Programming

As most of us, isn't it?

How boring am I?

One last ~~thing™~~ passion



Martial art



The wait is over ...





Wing Tsun*

*Romanization is controversial

What is that?



It has various possible translations

The most commonly used is "Eternal Spring". **Who catches the citation?**



It is part of kung fu

In particular, it is part of the Southern China martial arts.



Pretty atypical

You won't see any spectacular roundhouse kicks or similar.

Where did it come from?



It was made for women

The tradition says it was created for Yim Wing Tsun to defend herself.



It derives from Shaolin

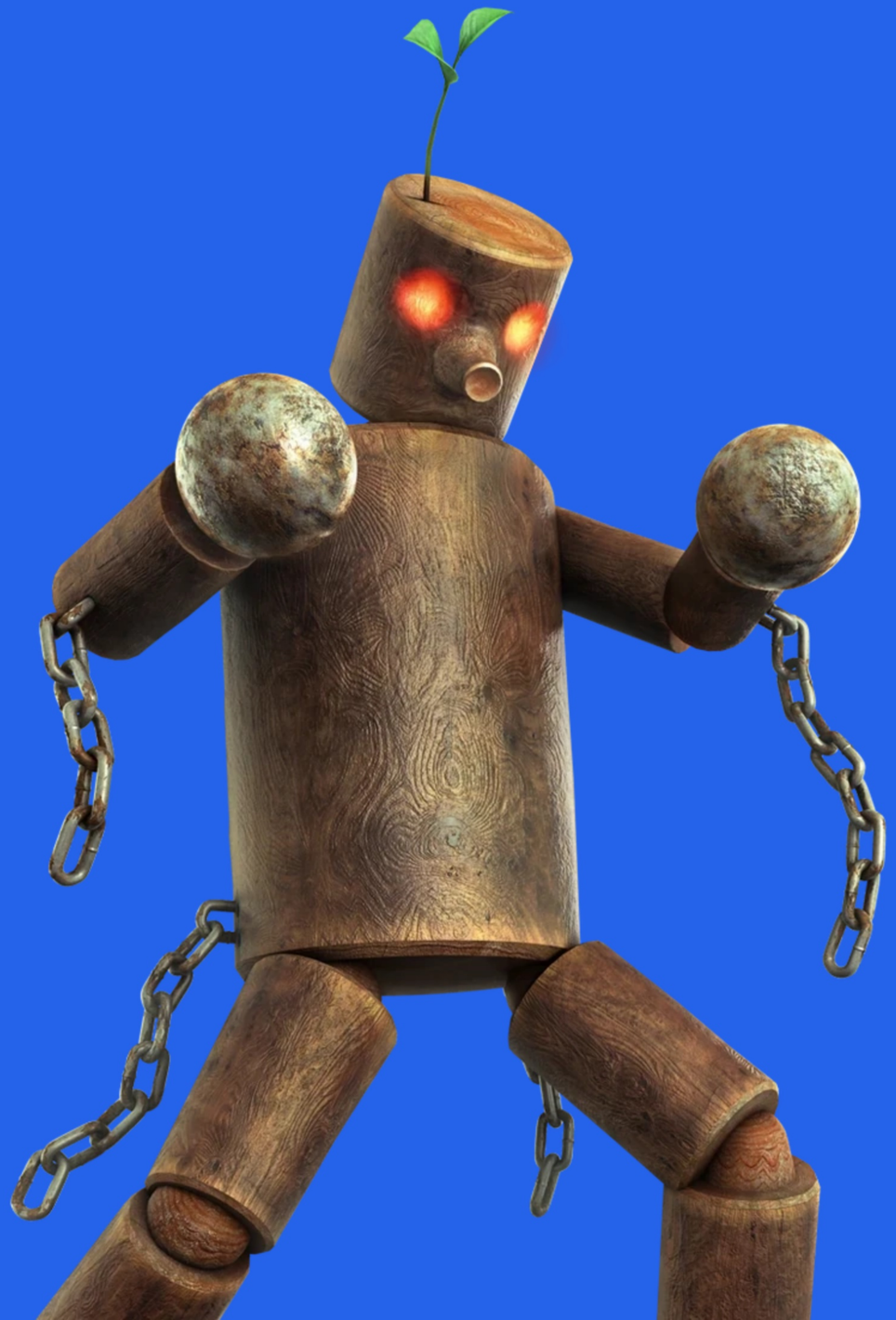
The tradition states the women monk Ng Mui as her original creator.



It also includes weapons

Butterfly knives and 3m staff are trained regularly.

Meet our training dummy



Sorry, I totally could not resist!





Meet our real training dummy

Why did I chose Wing Tsun?



It focuses on effectiveness

Every millisecond matters. **Ring a bell?**



It is for everyone

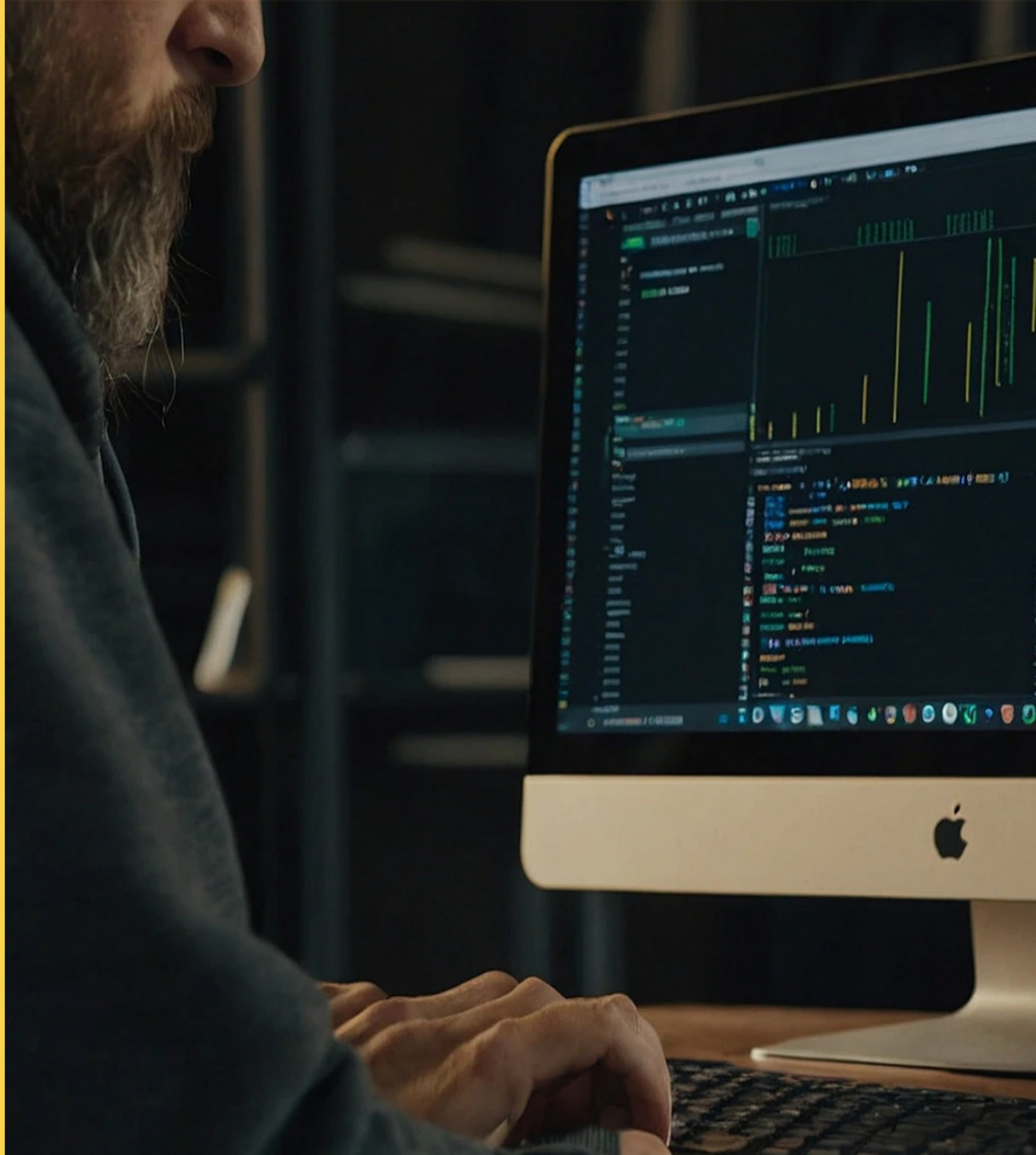
You don't need to be able to do splits to throw a kick.



It redefines the concept of strength

You don't really need muscles.

What about programming?



Let's clarify few things



Fighting is everywhere
Is not only on the ring or on the street. It's a general principle.



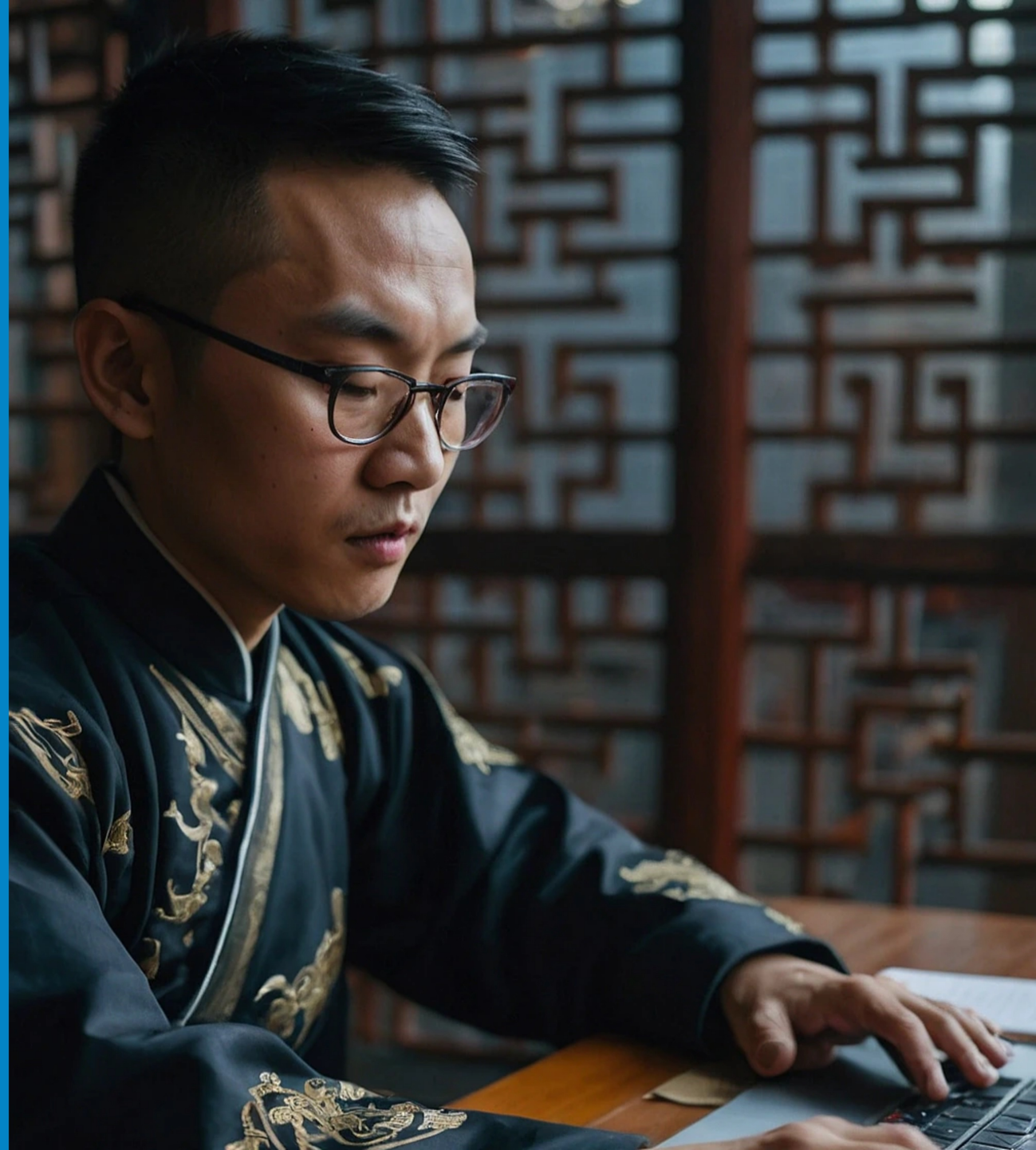
Martial arts are not just about fighting
Sometimes, they become a life philosophy.



Remember about the personas?
I unconsciously use what I learned in Wing Tsun everywhere.

Let's apply the Wing Tsun principles to programming!

... finally! 😂




No sifu has proof checked this talk!
Opinions are mine and I'm still learning. Be gentle! 🙏

Energy Principles



Energy Principles (1/4)

“Give up your own Force.”

1st Energy Principle

Give up your own Force

“K.I.S.S. and don't be stubborn.”

1st Energy Principle applied to programming



Energy Principles (2/4)

“Give up your opponent's Force.”

2nd Energy Principle

Give up your opponent's Force

“Contain or redirect any point of failure where it cannot harm.”

2nd Energy Principle applied to programming



Energy Principles (3/4)

“Use your attacker's Force against him/her.”

3rd Energy Principle

Use your attacker's Force against him/her

“Thoroughly study the APIs and existing systems you have to work with.”

3rd Energy Principle applied to programming

3

Energy Principles (4/4)

“Add your own Force.”

4th Energy Principle

Add your own Force

“Apply lateral thinking when solving others' complex problems.”

4th Energy Principle applied to programming



Chi Sao principles



But what is exactly Chi Sao?



Chi Sao



It means "sticky hands"

It's a drill system which focuses on **NEVER** losing contact with opponent's arms.



It stimulates reflexes

As soon as you feel the way is free, **you hit**.



It stimulates self-perception

You must be careful in how much and where you use your force.

Back to Chi Sao principles!



Chi Sao Principles (1/4)

“If the way is free, go forward.”

1st Chi Sao Principle

If the way is free, go forward

“Never think short-term
and deliver continously.”

1st Chi Sao Principle applied to programming

1

Chi Sao Principles (2/4)

“If the way is not free, stick to the opponent.”

2nd Chi Sao Principle

If the way is not free, stick to the opponent

“When there is an obstacle, put it aside for a little but continue to monitor.”

2nd Chi Sao Principle applied to programming

2

Chi Sao Principles (3/4)

“If the opponent is stronger, yield.”

3rd Chi Sao Principle

If the opponent is stronger, yield

“You can't always have it your way.
Be ready to yield in a controlled manner.”

3rd Chi Sao Principle applied to programming



Chi Sao Principles (4/4)

“If the opponent goes back, follow him/her.”

4th Chi Sao Principle

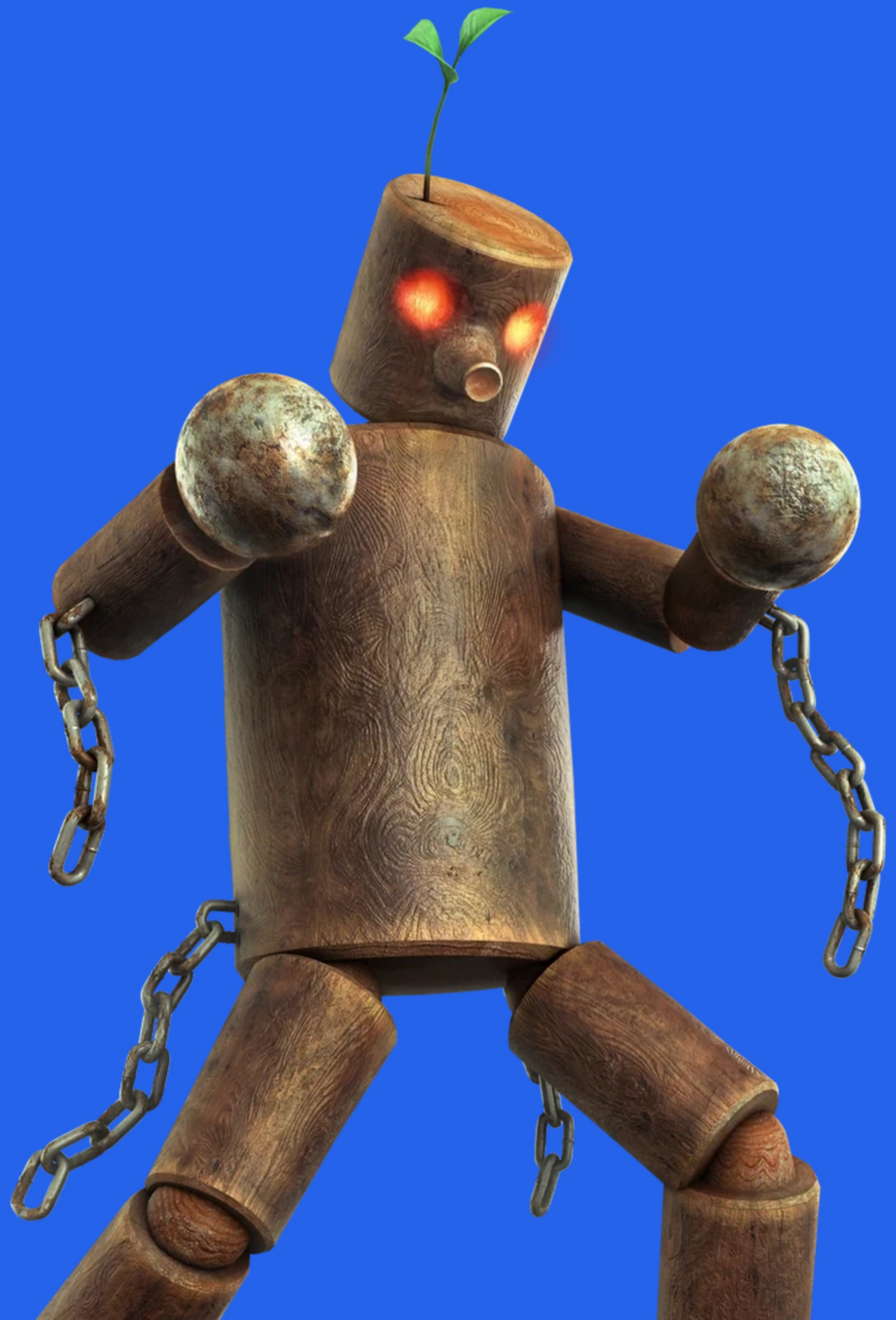
If the opponent goes back, follow him/her

“When debugging, always follow a problem up to its resolution.
Don't believe in luck or coincidences.”

4th Chi Sao Principle applied to programming



Bonus principle!





A good Chum Kiu shall be performed within the space occupied by a laying cow.

The Chum Kiu principle

Sorry, could not resist (again)!



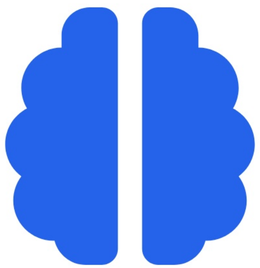
Take home lessons

What can we learn from this long journey?



Everything matters

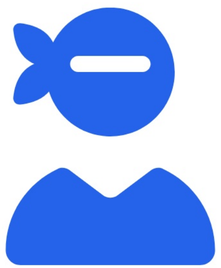
All the knowledge we have helps us in our daily tasks.



You can't control everything

Including your own brain.

Remember the elephant?



Programming is like fighting

Fighting strategies can improve our approach to programming.

One last thing™

“Mastering others is strength.
Mastering yourself is true power.”

Lao Tzu





Thank you!

Paolo Insogna

Node.js TSC, Principal Engineer

@p_insogna

paolo.insogna@platformatic.dev

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