



MARTIAL ARTS, Taiji, YOGA AND MORE
THE PEACEFUL DRAGON
FOR THE CONTEMPORARY MIND, BODY AND SPIRIT
Newsletter



www.thepeacefuldragon.com

April, 2007

704.504.8866



Click on a link below to go to that section of the newsletter

Message from Master Eric Sbarge
[Upcoming Events](#)
[Window on the Tao](#)
[Martial Arts Tips](#)
[Peaceful Dragon School News](#)

[Children's Programs](#)
[Student of the Month](#)
[Celebrating Students' Lives](#)
[Disciple's Forum](#)
[Promotions](#)

[Grandmaster's Wisdom](#)
[Dragon Report](#)
[Students Ask](#)
[Path to Success](#)
[Classifieds](#)

Message from Master Eric Sbarge



I'm excited to be leading the first Peaceful Dragon group tour to China on October 5-16, 2007. I've always believed that the greatest and most meaningful travel is the journey inward through meditation and contemplation – but this China tour can be the next best thing!

I urge all students and family members to join us. I know some students or family members are on a tight budget and a tour such as this is not inexpensive, but we have negotiated a tremendous price for all that is included and this trip will be a once-in-a-lifetime experience for many. If there is a way to swing it, I hope you

decide to swing!

I always look forward to spending time with students outside of the training studios, but following Grandmaster's example I generally only dedicate that time if it somehow contributes to growing our kung fu skills or knowledge. This trip will surely offer many cultural experiences and training opportunities that will stay with each of us for life, but equally important to me it will be a chance to share great company.

Don't forget to read all about the China Tour on our web site at:

<http://www.thepeacefuldragon.com/chinatrip.shtml>

I hope you'll join us!

[Back to Top](#)



Upcoming Events

Special Workshop with Master Park Bok Nam

Friday, April 13, 5 – 10pm, and Saturday, April 14, 11am – 5pm

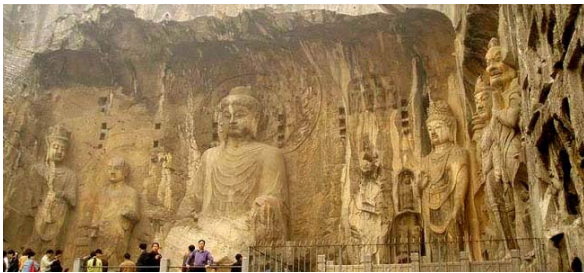


World-renowned Bagua Master Park Bok Nam comes to The Peaceful Dragon this year with new topics in *Advanced Fighting Methods and Applications* Friday evening. Saturday, he will focus on *Qigong for Health and Strength*. Master Park's workshops are open to adults of all ages and levels of experience, and to Children's Program students green sash and above. Bagua (Pakua) is one of the three internal martial arts, and emphasizes circular movement, quick footwork, and continuous change. *Elbow and knee pads are recommended for fighting applications.*

Early-bird registration by April 10th, both days is \$180, one day \$100; the public both days \$260, one day \$150. After April 10th add \$20. *Cash or money orders only, please; at the door, add \$20.* Workshops of this caliber are rare. A lot of material is given for the

low price, where you would otherwise spend much more time and money in regular classes to get the same thing. If you have an interest in Bagua, you will take this opportunity to enhance your understanding and skills.

MAKE YOUR PLANS FOR CHINA BEFORE TIME RUNS OUT



Be aware that travel to Canada and Mexico now requires passports, causing very high demand and several extra weeks to process passport applications – eight to ten weeks is the estimate now and waiting times in line at a post office that processes requests can be a few hours. You may save time and get better pictures by doing your passport photos at AAA rather than at a post office. Seats are still available on the flight to New York to make the connection for the trip, but if that flight sells out, you'll have to find another

way to New York. You'll need vaccinations, some of which have to happen on a timetable to be effective. Lots of things to plan for an international trip; but, as Sifu says, this will be the trip of a lifetime for most of us – a chance to spend time with our Teacher doing things we dream of, and to train at the Shaolin Temple and have the guidance of Venerable Guolin. If you are on the fence, go to the link

<http://www.chinagoldentours.com/special/freetour.htm> for a great look at what the trip offers. For good instructions, go to <http://www.thepeacefuldragon.com/chinatrip.shtml> and print the pages out to use as a preparation checklist. It is not too late to get on board and the cost is very good for all that is offered.

IT'S TIME FOR SPRING CLEANING AND LANDSCAPING

Saturday, May 5, 9am – 4pm

The weather is starting to get nicer; flowers are in bloom; grass is perking up; and the fish are getting festive! Time to set aside an hour, half a day, whatever you can spare, and help get your school and grounds in shape; after all, it's a mutual thing: the school helps you get in shape and stay there, and in a traditional setting like ours, it's fitting that you help keep the school fit too! More volunteers mean less work for everyone. We'll see you there! [Back to Top](#)

Workshop with GRANDMASTER DeMARIA

Friday, June 29 – Sunday, July 1

All students should plan ahead to attend this workshop. The opportunity to train with your Grandmaster happens only once a year. We seem to be so easily prevented from doing the things that are best for us. More than most, Grandmaster understands the distractions of life, and if you miss a workshop it's not a big deal, but it's the end of that opportunity, and they are few. Think about what you want to do in the short months before the end of June. We hope you'll find the time and resources in your complex life to join your fellow students for what is always a tremendous experience. Details of the workshop will follow as they are known.

MONTHLY DISCUSSION TOPIC WITH MASTER SBARGE

Wednesday, April 4, 7:45pm

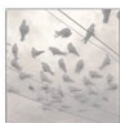
The topic for April is Diet and Nutrition for Optimal Health and Energy. What we eat and drink on a most intimate and intricate level is what we are. Our diet affects how we feel, moods, clarity, stamina, power of recuperation, literally all that supports our ability to enhance the quality of our lives. In this discussion, find out more about the control you really have over what you eat and how to become adept at making the best choices for yourself.

MONTHLY MASTERY DISCUSSION GROUP

There are now topics each month for discussion, which will expand from just martial arts mastery, to universal success and mastery principles for relationships, business success and more. The discussions are open to all adults in the Mastery Training Program.

SPORTS EVENT FOR STUDENTS

Apr. 1 (Sun.) – Softball, 2:00pm, Rain Date Sat. Apr. 7, 3:30pm



Window on the Tao

“Gentleness overcomes strength:
Fish should be left in the deep pool,
And sharp weapons of the state should be left
Where none can see them.”

Lao Tse, *Tao Te Ching*

Commentary by Master Eric Sbarge:

Simply, leave well enough alone. As martial artists, it is important to remember not to display our combat skills, and certainly not to seek unnecessary chances to test our strength and skills. Stay out of trouble's way, and only display your gentle skills that lead to accomplishment.

[Back to Top](#)

Martial Arts Tips

Warm up before every workout, and stretch to cool down after every workout.

One common error students make is to stretch first thing before working out. Stretching cold muscles invites pulls or strains, and won't lead to maximum flexibility.

Another common error is to not stretch at all and jump right into very vigorous training or exercise. This also can lead to injured or strained muscles and joints.

The right approach is to warm up first. Ideal warm-ups include rolling the joints, Beating the Heavenly Drum, walking or jogging, or any other light exercise for at least five minutes or so.

After your warm-up, stretch a little bit, and then go into your vigorous training. Save the intensive stretching for after the workout. When your body is really "hot" after hard training, the muscles will stretch most comfortably and safely, and this also provides a good cooling down period which helps your muscles and joints to recover best and be ready for your next workout.



THE PEACEFUL DRAGON FEATURED IN CHARLOTTE OBSERVER

Master Sbarge was highlighted in a nice article on The Peaceful Dragon that appeared in the Charlotte Observer on March 8th. If you missed it, here's an excerpt.

There's a spiritual oasis tucked between industrial buildings along Steele Creek Road. Set back from the busy street where tractor-trailer trucks rumble, the Peaceful Dragon stands out.

Read the entire article on-line at <http://charlotte.com/424/story/43707.html>

Holiday Closing

The Peaceful Dragon will be closed on Easter Sunday. We hope all who celebrate Easter have a great holiday.

IN-CLASS REMINDERS

Please keep water bottles and personal belongings on the floor or chairs along the wall where you enter the studio. Kindly do not put water bottles on the window sills in the studios – they drip and stain the paint.

Only instructors are in charge of fans, windows and thermostats. Students, please do not open and close windows in the studios without instructor's permission, and do not touch the thermostats.

Remember that in favorable weather we will often go outside for classes. Remember to bring a sweatshirt or long-sleeve shirt if it is cool outside.

[Back to Top](#)

MINOR CLASS SCHEDULE CHANGES

Due to demand, we have added a Thursday evening adult Shaolin class, led by our most senior student, Laoshr (Instructor) Aaron Arden. Due to lack of demand, we have dropped the Saturday afternoon adult Shuai Chiao class. In a busy, dynamic school, changes like this are inevitable from time to time as we strive to serve the needs of the majority of our students. We regret any inconvenience that may have resulted for a few. Any student regularly scheduled in a different Shaolin class must see Wes or George if they want to switch to the less crowded Thursday class.

ADULT CLASS MAKEUP OPTIONS

Currently, adults who must miss a class can make up their class at any other one during the week. However, due to full rosters, the following classes ARE NOT AVAILABLE as make-up classes:

Monday night Shaolin
Wednesday night Shaolin
Wednesday night Tai Chi

These classes should only be attended by students regularly assigned to them. All other students please find alternate class times if you must make up a missed class.



Children's Programs

LEADERSHIP CLUB ENJOYS SUCCESSFUL FIRST YEAR

The children's Leadership Club is marking the completion of its first year, and so far it has been tremendously successful. Students in the Leadership Club meet twice a month with Master Sbarge for intensive seminars for developing success and leadership skills. Content is drawn from a range of authors and sources including Stephen Covey, Sun Tzu's Art of War, Napoleon Hill, Dan Kennedy, Lee Miltner, professional sports coaches, and more.

Leadership Club students put what they learn into practice by acting as assistants to the instructors in kids martial arts classes. Adult instructors monitor and mentor these young leaders, helping them improve their abilities to teach and lead. This has proven to be of great value to Leadership Club students and to other children in classes who benefit from their encouragement and assistance.

Leadership Club members enjoy the additional opportunity to learn advanced Kung Fu material of their own choosing. Currently, they are working on the exotic Peacock Fan combat form – and they're looking pretty sharp with it so far!

Student of the Month

A new feature, every month our instructors will select a different Peaceful Dragon student from either our Adult Program or Children's Program for recognition. We'll highlight their special successes or contributions within our school that led to their selection.

[Back to Top](#)

Congratulations to Kathy Crowe! Kathy began training in Tai Chi and Yoga at The Peaceful Dragon along with her husband David, almost a decade ago. She had no prior experience, and by her own admission had no particular aptitude for learning the movements and principles of these arts. Despite this, she trained diligently and persistently not just in the forms but also in the push hands, weapons, self-defense techniques and conditioning drills of Tai Chi. She reached Disciple Level after five years, and is on track to be certified as a full Tai Chi instructor when she passes the ten-year mark in her training.



Kathy and her favorite hat

She has not only made significant progress in Tai Chi, but has recently added training in the Shaolin Kung Fu. You can find her sparring and grappling with every other student on the floor – despite the fact that Kathy just celebrated her birthday and is 62 years young!

Kathy claims she feels more energetic and healthy now than when she started although she's ten years older. She is proof that you are never too old to start any of the arts we teach, and make real progress – but that is not the reason she is being honored as student of the month.

Kathy is being honored because of her friendly, caring and generous personality, and the fact that she has been one of the greatest contributors to the growth and success of *THE PEACEFUL DRAGON*. During the early years when there was no budget for anything, she *voluntarily* designed and administered our web site as well as all our ads, fliers, brochures and more to help promote the school. Though she is now a part-time paid staff member, she continues to do these jobs with professionalism and a great deal of positive energy. She selflessly dedicates a great amount of her own time to helping out new students as an Assistant Instructor; helping with projects around the school; designing and managing Grandmaster's A.C.C.S. web site; and training to be the best martial artist she can be.

For that, we salute and congratulate Kathy Crowe as our Student of the Month.

Celebrating Students' Lives

Editor's Note: Students and parents of students, we would like to know about your activities, successes and accomplishments outside of our martial arts school. Please send any and all news about yourself, or your child who trains at The Peaceful Dragon, to the editor at: maibu@carolina.rr.com. Pieces will be selected each month for inclusion in the newsletter.



Disciple Forum

The Role of Focus in our Practice

By Laoshr (Instructor) Eric Mullis

Here are some thoughts that I've had in class from time to time: "I love this form," "I hate this form," "I'm tired," "How much longer until class is over," "He's doing that wrong," "I do this well," "What should I eat after class is over?" All of these thoughts are instances in which my mind distracts me from what I'm doing, whether running a form, drilling a technique, or sparring. It's difficult to keep the mind on track, to keep it focused on what I'm doing in the present moment. But the martial arts demand this of us. Why?

[Back to Top](#)

A lack of mental focus hinders attainment of higher skill. Once, when Master Guolin was here, a student asked him how much one should train every day. He replied that his monks usually practice two hours a day, but he stipulated that they do not need to practice as much as others since they remain focused on what they are doing. Since they are mentally attentive, they get much more out of their practice. Hearing him discuss this made me reflect on how much time I've wasted "going through the motions." Our martial skills will improve faster if we attend to what we do.

A lack of mental focus also hinders us from reaping other benefits that martial arts practice makes possible. How can one reduce stress if the mind is continually jumping from one random thought to the next? More could be said about how the mind influences health and our sense of well being, but I would like to conclude by mentioning a few things that can be done to help focus the mind.

The easy answer—and one that harkens back to the monk's training—is to learn and practice meditation. You will focus on quieting the mind and this will positively affect the quality of your training. In addition, one can strive to make Shaolin, Tai Chi, or yoga class more productive by focusing on specific things. Here are a few ideas:

1. Focus on your imaginary opponent. While running a form, imagine that you are applying each move.
2. Focus on a feeling of rootedness.
3. Focus on the continuity of movement ("silk-reeling energy").
4. Focus on the expression of power. Look for blockages or incorrect pathways. Also look for different kinds of power (shocking, pounding, etc.).
5. Focus on your breathing (sink it, don't hold it, etc.)

Of course, it makes good sense to focus on the things that you have difficulties with. Good Luck!

Promotions

In this new section, beginning next month, we'll list children who have just been promoted or who are eligible to promote at the next testing. We'll also recognize adult students who have moved from Block A to Block B, and more advanced students who are progressing through the levels towards Disciple and beyond.

Wisdom of our Grandmaster Ma For Ren

Herbs, Health and Healing



There is a new product I have noticed on the market now which is excellent for your health. It is made by the company called Turkey Hill, which is well known. They make a Green Tea with Ginseng and Honey. This product can be found in most supermarkets in the juice section. This combination is very good. I don't advocate drinking ice cold drinks after a workout as this is not good for the stomach; however, drinks at room temperature or warm are great for your health.

Another good health drink combines a cup of green tea, one teaspoon of apple cider vinegar, and one teaspoon honey. Drink it hot. It is said this will cure anything in time; drink as much as you like as often as you like.

[Back to Top](#)

Along with practice of the martial arts comes injury. To train without use of herbs is risky at best. Herbs promote healing, and increase Qi levels.

Great Grandmaster Chang was a big advocate of the use of herbs. We would often go to New York Chinatown and there he would discuss with me the differences between herbs and which type of herb was best for various martial arts injury or strength building.

Each Martial School has their own secret preparation that they feel is the best combination of herbs for their students. All you need to do is ask for them and your teacher will direct you to the best herbs for your problems and protection. If you don't use herbs you will find your strength levels decreasing; healing of injuries much slower – the worst of all, internal injury such as lung bruises or kidney bruises etc.

Generally speaking there are two types of herbs: one for internal problems and one for external problems. You need to address both of these to protect yourself from serious bodily damage. Ask your Teacher to guide you in this matter. Some herbs are very expensive. It is not unusual to spend over a \$100 just for three pieces of herb and that is still not considered expensive. A good internal herb in our school runs about \$300 for a gallon, which would last you about two to three months. Again, this is still not considered expensive for a good herb mix. As always, see your Teacher for guidance with herb use.

NOTICE: if you have not received email from Grandmaster in a while, it may be due to a data glitch that happened at the A.C.C.S. Please resend your full name and email address to Ma Shrfu at: hqaccs@optonline.net. If you've never participated, and want to get email directly from Grandmaster Ma, go to <http://kungfu.org/requestform.shtml>. Include a brief thanks for Grandmaster's generosity. Make sure the punctuation and spelling on your email address are correct. Don't forget to add Grandmaster to your approved senders list. If your computer is blocking email, get help from someone locally; Grandmaster Ma cannot help you with these matters.



Dragon Report

PEACEFUL DRAGON LEADS SUCCESSFUL FUNDRAISER CLASS FOR LAKE WYLIE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The Peaceful Dragon has just finished leading a six-week After School Martial Arts Class at Lake Wylie Elementary, open to all students in grades K – 5.

The tuition for this class, which was led by our senior instructors George Lu and Wes Adams with assistance from Kevin Deal, was all donated by The Peaceful Dragon to the elementary school. Nearly 60 children participated – and our fundraiser made over \$2,000 for Lake Wylie Elementary!

Happy and excited elementary school participants got to enjoy their final class at The Peaceful Dragon where they performed a demonstration for their parents, and received their white sash, a certificate of accomplishment, and a Peaceful Dragon T-Shirt.

[Back to Top](#)

YOGA AND MEDITATION RETREAT ENJOYED BY MANY

On Saturday, March 3, over two dozen Peaceful Dragon students and public participants enjoyed a full day of relaxing and rejuvenating Meditation and Yoga. The retreat was led by Master Eric Sbarge. Participants discussed the history, methods and principles of various types of meditation and yoga and then immersed themselves in Ch'an (Zen) meditation and Shaolin Yoga.

Of special benefit to many of the attendees was the detailed practice of the Shaolin Bodhidharma *Yi Jin Jing* form, which Master Sbarge explained in detail. Both beginners and advanced practitioners came away with new insights – and hopefully a big boost in their enthusiasm for their practice of meditation and yoga.

Students Ask

Feel free to email any questions about your training to Master Eric Sbarge at Sifu@thepeacefuldragon.com.

Question: I have really enjoyed my classes and can see big changes in myself already. I wish my girlfriend would join, but she shows no interest in even coming with me to watch a class. Do you have any advice how I can get her interested?

Answer: No one will do anything unless their karma means for them to do it. The time has to be right, and the circumstances have to be right.

My advice is to stop focusing on trying to get your girlfriend involved in our classes. Instead, focus on bringing as many of the benefits of your training home to her as you can: Calmness, tolerance, good health, a fit body, a positive spirit, loving energy, confidence, and so on.

Don't ask for or demand these qualities from her in return – simply give them openly. Over time she may appreciate these qualities that you are exhibiting more of, and seek the source. Or she may not. But either way you cannot control her, you can only control your self. Let go of the desire to influence her and you will be much happier, and oddly enough she is more likely to be influenced by you.



Path to Success

“If you think you can or you think you can't, you're right.”

Henry Ford, Industrialist

[Back to Top](#)

Classifieds



ALL THAT JAZZ! Barbara Nail (well known jazz radio

personality) is hosting [David Pankey's group](#) for a jazz concert at the [Mint Museum of Art](#) on Randolph Rd on [April 15 at 3 pm](#). The program will last slightly over one hour. David will be accompanied by his usual guys (guitar, string bass and drums). There will also be a guest trumpet soloist coming to feature some Miles Davis tunes.



What could be more fun than a party right here! That special someone and guests will enjoy lots of fun and games (including the obstacle course), plus an exciting martial arts class. All guests receive a gift certificate for a FREE private introductory class and the birthday boy or girl gets a special present from The Peaceful Dragon! Read all about it at:

www.ThePeacefulDragon.com/BirthdayParties.shtml

Your ad could be here; text and graphics, a scan of your business card, or artwork you submit. The cost is \$5 for students, \$10 for the public. Give your copy to George, or email maibu@carolina.rr.com. Pay at the front counter.

PLANNING TO BUY something for the house or garden, indulge a favorite pass-time, or get that hot new DVD or the latest gadget? Consider shopping through Amazon first where you'll find competitive pricing on everything PLUS – through arrangement between *THE PEACEFUL DRAGON* and Amazon – a percentage of your purchase goes to help our school flourish. Get what you want and support your school too! Go to: <http://www.thepeacefuldragon.com/books.shtml> and use Search Amazon.com for the products you want.

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[Back to Top](#)

NOW brand Supplements a BARGAIN!

Save 20% off retail for these top quality vitamins, minerals and food supplements. Carefully researched and chosen by Debra and Sifu, NOW products are an exceptional benefit for students and invaluable to combat stress and enhance overall health. Orders are placed the first of each month and ready for pickup in a week or so.