



The Peaceful Dragon

Newsletter

December, 2003

On The Dragon Path



Sifu has decided to phase out his message as a regular monthly column. If Sifu has something to say of course he will, but it is his hope instead that students, especially disciples, will contribute an essay about their positive experiences with their training or general experiences at *The Peaceful Dragon*. Informative articles about the arts we teach are also welcome. And it would be very exciting and appropriate to see the words of our Young Dragons in this space too, perhaps along with the writer's picture. This is a student newsletter. Anyone can contribute, and is encouraged to do so. You can give your hardcopy to Sifu or George or to Michael Ballantyne – editor, or email me, bmk@carolina.rr.com.

Special Announcements

The Peaceful Dragon Hosts Chinese New Year Festivities

Saturday, January 17, 11 – 3pm

For the first time, *The Peaceful Dragon* will host a FREE Chinese New Year's Celebration for our students, their families and the general public. Specially prepared traditional Chinese New Years dishes will be served in lieu of our regular menu.

Young Dragons martial arts testing and promotions will kick off the day at 11AM, then from Noon till 3PM there will be demonstrations in lion dancing, martial arts, tai chi, yoga, Chinese dance, calligraphy and much more, plus free classes in many of these activities. Children can also enjoy a variety of games, crafts and activities, while adults can enjoy informative lectures and discussions on a variety of topics ranging from Feng Shui to Acupuncture.

Workshops and Events

The Peaceful Dragon Celebrates

Wednesday, December 31

The word is out about our eclectic and healthy menu, and how Chef Geoff brings off special events with such relaxed and winning style.



Plan now for our Western New Years dinner December 31. \$35 per person (students) \$45 (public) includes a multi-course

dinner and a complimentary bottle of champagne per couple, plus a midnight group meditation for a harmonious new year. Seatings are at 6:30 and 8:30. Reservations required. Space is limited so make your plans early.

Chinese New Year Dinner & Ceremony

Saturday, January 24, 5:30pm until . . .



Our annual Chinese New Years dinner and ceremony for students and their families is January 24. The evening includes awards ceremonies, student promotions, lion-dancing, and lots of other dancing, partying and more. No Peaceful Dragon student

should miss this important annual event! The gourmet dinner buffet is catered by *The Peaceful Dragon* this year and includes soup, appetizers, multiple entrees, desserts, tea and soft drinks, and sake for each table. A cash bar will be available. Family and friends are welcome. Tickets are sold first come, first served. Adults: \$30. Children under 12 half price. Note the starting time: **5:30 for the demo, dinner starts at 6**. We have many more Young Dragons now and encourage all of them to come with their families.

What's Up?

Day-Long Tai Chi Retreat

Sunday, February 15, 8:30am – 5:00pm

If you never got to experience our four-day mountain tai chi retreat, check out the pictures of the last one that are posted on the board. Then, sign up for all the benefits and fun of intensive focus for an entire day of tai chi training with no distractions at *The Peaceful Dragon*. Anybody can do this



workshop whether you have studied tai chi or not. Beginners will receive detailed support on fundamentals; advanced students will learn several new push-hands patterns and self-defense applications as well as rigorous

training of the solo form. Students, sign up early for just \$29, public \$59. After February 11, add \$10. Lunch tickets are available for \$6.50 each. Remember that the regular menu is closed to workshop attendees; however you may bring your own vegetarian meals if you wish.

Fall Classics Tournament Results



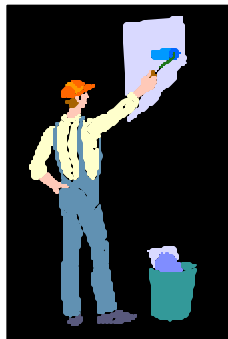
Hosted again by Sifu Rick Panico and the Hung Gar school, Mooresville, this annual event showcases regional schools and martial artists, and helps support SACC: Structured Athletics for Challenged Children. Students who participated this year did well and deserve congratulations.

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|------------------------------|---|
| Carrie Chun – | 1 st place, teen empty hand form |
| | 1 st place, weapons form |
| Eric Mullis – | 3 rd place, adult empty hand form |
| | 2 nd place, adult advanced weapons |
| | 2 nd place, adult men's advanced sparring |
| Lyn Adams &
Eric Mullis – | 1 st place, adult 2-person empty hand form |
| Jennifer Shults – | 1 st place, adult women's push hands |
| | 2 nd place, moving step push hands |

Volunteering

Cleaning and Maintenance Day

Sunday, December 14, 10am – 6pm



There is just a lot of stuff to keep up with, and no permanent staff for building and grounds, so while we have students who lend their expertise in engineering or landscaping, the work must be done by everyone sharing the load. Please come help any time during the day. It's good Wu-de.

Volunteer coordinator Shawn Hammond reminds us that we have a lot of things planned for Chinese New Year in 2004 and we will need a bunch of volunteers to help pull it off. If you can make it to the meeting on Wednesday, December 10th we would love to have you come and help in the planning for these events. We will meet in studio B at 7:30pm.

Young Dragons

Programs Growing, Kids Benefit



The charter of the Young Dragons program is to provide world-class training that emphasizes character development. To that end, George and Sifu have been

researching the best programs in order to incorporate top-tier material into our own Young Dragons programs, and plan to introduce many exciting new elements in early 2004.

Thanks to all the parents who have been instrumental in getting the advisory committee off the ground. We encourage more of you to get involved. This committee is working with Sifu to:

- * Determine what is working well or not well.
- * Give feedback to the Young Dragons staff on program improvements/changes.

- * Provide a channel for the Peaceful Dragon staff to get more ideas for the Young Dragons program.
- * Coordinate parent volunteers for Young Dragon activities such as Testing Receptions and Parent's Night Out sessions.

Following are the important dates for the rest of 2003 and all of 2004. Clip and save.

Young Dragons 2004 Events Calendar



Quarterly Parent Volunteer and Advisory Committee Meetings

5:30pm during class – all parents are encouraged to participate!

Jan. 8, Mar. 11, June 10, and Sep. 9

Testing

Saturdays at 1:45 pm

Dec. 6
Jan. 10
Feb. 14
Mar. 13
April 10
May 15
June 12
July 10
Aug. 14
Sep. 11
Oct. 9
Nov. 13
Dec. 11

Parents Night Out

Fridays from 6:30 – 10:00pm

Dec. 5
Jan. 2
Feb. 6
Mar. 5
April 2
May 7
June 4
July 2
Aug. 6
Sep. 3
Oct. 1
Nov. 5
Dec. 3

NOTES:

Dragon Classified Ads

Order Quality Martial Arts Supplies and Weapons And Save!

Save 10% off retail for high quality martial arts supplies direct from Martial Arts Mart and waive the shipping and handling fees. Many items are on display for you to try sizes and styles, and any item can be ordered from their extensive catalog.

Fill out one of the Order Forms at the display area near the restroom and give it to our staff along with a 50% deposit at our front service counter. Orders will be placed the first of each month and merchandise will usually arrive within one week and be ready for you to pick up.

NOW brand Vitamins, Herbs & Food Supplements a Bargain!

Save 20% off retail for these top quality products. Carefully researched and chosen by Debra and Sifu, these 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 are generally ready for pickup in a week or so.

Residential Remodeling by Master Craftsman!



You can afford the best. No job too small. Call for a free estimate on your project.
Aaron Arden, 704.634.4809

Pathways

Wu-de is the very fabric of a traditional martial practice. At *The Peaceful Dragon*, we return again and again to this important subject. As we approach another new year, all students are encouraged to reflect on their understanding of *Wu-de* and their conduct as martial artists. Like any other code of behavior, *Wu-de* is a matter of common sense, common courtesy, tradition, and also partly something that is just felt. As students, our understanding of *Wu-de* grows as we grow in our practice. An essential part of our practice is carrying what we learn into our everyday lives outside of class; and so it is with *Wu-de*.

Following is a short list of small but important *Wu-de* behaviors that contribute to the quality of life in class, at *The Peaceful Dragon* generally, and certainly are not amiss in life at large.

- * Come to class on time, prepared to learn.
- * Wear your complete uniform.
- * Stand in straight lines, less experienced behind more experienced.
- * Stop talking when Sifu enters the studio and do not interrupt Sifu when he is talking.
- * Do not walk out of class without letting Sifu or a senior student know.
- * If you are late, enter with a minimum of commotion, take the nearest position in back, bow once to Sifu and join in the activity under way. At the end of class, perform the rest of your bows before you leave. If the class is doing any meditation exercise, wait until that has concluded before you enter.
- * Never stand with your arms folded across your chest — this is a sign of disrespect.
- * Disciples are not sifus, but are there to help junior students as part of their own learning; give them the consideration due that role.
- * Get your drink or bathroom break before class rather than interrupting class for these needs.
- * If you are not in class, be aware of your noise level out of consideration for those who are in class, as well as for those patrons who come to *The Peaceful Dragon* for other reasons.
- * Be helpful and supportive to newer students whenever possible; be courteous and respectful to everyone.
- * DO NOT gossip about Sifu, his family, or other students and do not tolerate it in others.
- * Make only commitments you can keep and then make sure you keep them.
- * And as Master Jou Tsung Hwa said, "Know yourself. Do your best. Don't overdo it. Make a little progress every day."

Student Essay

Y in and Y ang

By Michael Ballantyne

In the West we tend to view the world as a place of opposites, and our lives as largely controlled by opposing forces, our choices limited to either/or.

As a result, we think there is no hurry because we have plenty of time — or there is not enough time to do anything; we are happy or sad; the world is wonderful or it is terrible. And while we may recognize that there are many shadings, our behavior predominantly does not agree with this intellectual understanding.

Even our view of Yin and Yang is essentially restricted to the nature of opposites. If we have read and observed a little, we may talk about the duality of things and how change is constant, but we really don't like constant change and especially emotionally we continue to view this duality as a cycle between opposites. Confusing, then, are those times when we aren't really sure what the opposite is: we're not really angry with a situation; we're not really hungry; we're not really in love; we're not really committed to our practice.... So what are we during most of the moments of our daily lives?

When I was seventeen I tried to define enlightenment as the utter absence of confusion. I have since discovered that clear ideas and certainty in beliefs do not result in understanding. The sages point the Way. Eagerly I have continued to grasp at each wonderful concept even as they whisper DO NOT.... It is so hard to let go.

Life does not revolve between extremes. Yin/yang is not a model of duality, it is a representation of ever-changing simultaneous All THAT IS. Every possibility, every action, every condition, every choice, exists at once and at that moment. The next moment it is different. The sages tell us that living is in the moment, now. As soon as we try to grasp it, it's gone. The next moment is already there, and the next, and thus we bounce our way through life.

I want to say to everyone that this is normal. It is what we *must* do: go through this painful and discontented process of confused living. But there is a delightful surprise in store: each of us will eventually become our own sage. As this inevitability unfolds, we will begin to not grasp the moment. All the time in the world and not enough time to do anything will exist simultaneously. The truth that everything matters will coincide with the truth that nothing matters. Doing and not doing will be the same thing.

In my own practice, I have all the time in the world to make as much progress as I can. The secret is to

not grasp, but to just do or not do with as much patience and awareness as I can muster. The line that divides the yin/yang symbol is called the taiji chord. It represents not so much the balance between extremes as the still point in the midst of constant change. It represents the path of moderation, not the avoidance of extremes. The taiji circle, yin/yang, is a representation of reality, of life and how it works, of the path to enlightenment and how we may discover it one step at a time, one breath at a time, one life at a time, at once, now.

At a Glance

Clip and post these dates on the fridge, by the phone or computer so you'll know at a glance what you need to plan for at *The Peaceful Dragon*.

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