



# THE PEACEFUL DRAGON

MARTIAL ARTS, Tai Chi, YOGA & MORE!



## Newsletter

July, 2006



[www.thepeacefuldragon.com](http://www.thepeacefuldragon.com)

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### A Message From Master Sbarge

First, I want to thank my teacher and our Grandmaster, Ma Foren, for the wonderful workshop he presented this year. He remains a true inspiration, constantly improving his martial arts skills and inspiring us to improve ours. I'm sure all students who attended will remember the workshop for a long time to come.

In keeping with Grandmaster's spirit, all of our instructors and staff are constantly striving to improve our skills at teaching martial arts, as well as our skill at managing and improving our school. As this year reaches its half-way point and having just finished Grandmaster's inspiring workshop, it seems like a good time to reflect on the many changes and improvements that we have made at The Peaceful Dragon since the start of the year.

For our adult students, the improvements have been most pronounced: A better- structured curriculum for both tai chi and shaolin kungfu; a new method for distinguishing experience and rank using custom patches and chevrons; the introduction of testing to evaluate student progress and rank; restructured student membership options to ensure an ideal training program for each student; and the introduction of Lyn's Boot Camp specifically to help over-weight or out-of-shape people get into great shape.

For children, we have also made several dramatic improvements: The introduction of our new Leadership Club; our revamped attendance policy with set make-up classes to ensure ideal student-teacher ratios; our first all-day Summer Camp; new training opportunities for advanced children including the sparring class, shuai chiao class and lion dance drumming class; and the recent introduction of our New Student Superstars program designed specifically to instill good self-discipline in brand new Block A students.

Perhaps the most important change for both the adult and the kids programs has been the behind-the-scenes new training program that all of our instructors now attend with me regularly, helping to ensure consistency and the highest level of skill in all phases of teaching our classes.

We still have other improvements in the works: Beginning next month, every Peaceful Dragon student – children and adults – will have an assigned instructor to act as an advisor and mentor to assist with any matters related to training; my monthly on-line lessons – *The Way of Shaolin* – are starting this month for all adult students; and for our After School Martial Arts Program with Transportation we have newly-structured activities for the coming school year.

None of these changes alter the course of our basic mission – to teach traditional martial arts in as authentic and intensive a manner possible to all who have a serious desire to learn. The majority of the changes we have

made simply help with logistical challenges that naturally occur as our school grows. It's one thing to pass on the arts to 30 people; it's quite another to pass them on effectively to 330 people. With the help of our many dedicated instructor-levels and disciples, and with the tremendous enthusiasm and effort shown by the great majority of our students, I do believe that all-in-all we are accomplishing our mission of teaching great martial arts.

Just as there is room for each of us to improve in our martial arts practice, there is always room for us to improve as a martial arts school. I am dedicated to continually working to improve our school, and I hope you will benefit from these improvements for many years to come.

## A Special Message from Grandmaster Ma Foren Following His Workshop

*I wish to thank you all from the Bottom of my heart for the wonderful experience you have offered me.*

*Your generosity and devotion for what you do is so obvious to me, and seeing this fills me with joy that is hard to express to you. I always come away from these experiences elated and I thank you for that. Again, you have provided me with a lasting memory of love, comradeship, devotion, enthusiasm, and so much more.*

*Again, we part, but I wish you all nothing but success in your training and I do hope our little time together has helped you in your quest, some small way.*

Buddha Bless You All.  
Ma ShrYa



## CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS



### ABOUT THE NEW LEADERSHIP CLUB

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There are many successful Black Sash Club students at The Peaceful Dragon, working hard and demonstrating skill and discipline in school and in their personal lives. Membership in our new Leadership Club goes a step further by providing training in the skills of leadership and the principles of success. No other schools and extra-curricular activities today offer anything close to the program created by Master Eric Sbarge.

Even an adult seminar might gloss over the essential truths that Master Sbarge presents – priceless knowledge from Sun Tzu’s *Art of War*, Miyamoto Musashi’s *Book of Five Rings*; modern day wisdom from Stephen R. Covey’s *Habits of Highly Effective People*, and others like Napoleon Hill, Dan Kennedy, as well as books and articles by leading sports figures.

Twice each month, a 40-minute seminar taught by Master Sbarge and The Peaceful Dragon Staff, will share the ways of persuasion, leadership and success, and your child will learn to use these new skills through promotion to Instructor’s Assistant in our regular children’s martial arts program. Students who are accepted into the Leadership Club will get specific guidance, mentoring and constructive feedback on their leadership performance. This kind of training carries forward into high school, college, even future careers.

Those who enter the Leadership Club will wear a special purple T-shirt that reads “Commitment to Leadership and Success”, echoing the real commitment they each have made. This opportunity is open to Young Dragons 9 – 13 and teens 14 – 15 in our Adult Kungfu Program. All Black Sash Club requirements must be satisfied (except #5 for those in the adult program) in order to qualify for the Leadership Club.

If your child is currently in the Black Sash Club and you believe your child is right for the Leadership Club, see Master Sbarge for more information and ask to complete an application for the program. For information on this and other programs, go to <http://www.thepeacefuldragon.com/students.shtml>.

## CHILDREN’S PROMOTION CEREMONY

July 15

The quarterly promotion is just around the corner. Make sure you are prepared. Please see your instructor if you need help or have any question about what you should know. All students are expected to be at this ceremony.

## EVENTS

### OUR WORDS OF THANKS -- GRANDMASTER’S WORKSHOP AN AWESOME EXPERIENCE



We are all humbly reminded of our place in the world of martial arts at the same time as we are exhilarated and encouraged by the opportunity to study under Grandmaster Ma Foren, a true pillar of that world. Seven times now – seven short summer weekends – we have been privileged to spend a few hours working hard to make just a small part of his knowledge and skill our own.

At The Peaceful Dragon, we have a magnificent Master whom we see every day. Sometimes we forget that through him we are also seeing our Grandmaster. After the banquet, where we had a wonderful dinner with Grandmaster and Master Peck and presented gifts of appreciation; after the demo,

which stands as perhaps the best one in recent memory; after the very special and thoroughly enjoyed mini-workshop for children; the workshop stands alone.

The workshop June 23 – 25 was perfect. Grandmaster has previously brought new forms and techniques to us, creations from his mind and profound experience, and we have been stuffed with this abundance. This time, he brought no forms. Instead, he carried a bright, quiet thing. It was a mirror. He asked each of us to look in the mirror and see our mind. Some of us struggled a little and some of us struggled a lot, and in the challenge we all saw something of our own minds.

Relying on what you know, assessing what you think you know, and discovering what you really know, is part of a personal responsibility in life that is easy to shirk. In the midst of attending to this responsibility during a martial arts workshop, many of us learned the weakness of our reliance, the faults of our assessments and the limits of our understanding. What a gift. What a tremendous gift! Given with love, with assurance, with the deft touch of mastery.

You believe you understand theory? Show me. You think you have control of forms? Create one. You consider you can teach? Instruct me. With patience, humor, exactness, Grandmaster held up the mirror. Good...not too bad...no...ah, I see your mind...do you see it, do you see?

There is a space in the mind and in the heart left momentarily echoing by the power and speed of a workshop like this one. Afterwards, we are filled with the rushing in of perceptions, memories, bits of understanding, maybe even a genuine *Ah Ha* as the flow of the experience slows around us.

Grandmaster Ma Foren thanked us for bringing him joy. Our thanks to you, Grandmaster, for bringing us the mirror. May we continue to use it on our own...until next time.

## U.S. INTERNATIONAL KUOSHU TOURNAMENT

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July 21 – 23



Here are the links for the upcoming tournament. Students are encouraged to go, whether to compete or as spectators. If you have not made travel arrangements, find a student who has – you may be able to coordinate plans or share a room.

### Information for the 2006 U.S. International Kuoshu Championship

- [Location: Hunt Valley Marriott, MD](#)
  - [Tournament Arrangements](#)
  - [Tournament Schedule](#)
  - [Competition Rules](#)
- [Registration Forms](#)
  - [Click Here to Register Online!!](#)
    - [Transportation Form](#)
- [Kuoshu Hall of Fame Nomination Form](#)
  - [Contact Information](#)

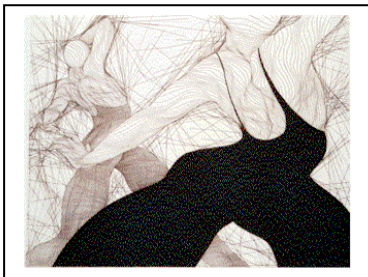
# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## THE WAY OF SHAOLIN

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All adult students have already received the first of a series of lessons that are a valuable adjunct to your training. Created by Master Sbarge, they are intended, in Sifu's words, "to enhance your knowledge of the principles and philosophies of the arts you are studying, and to give you practical guidance on using this knowledge to improve your daily life." A new lesson will be given each month. Each adult student is expected to complete these assignments on a timely basis as part of your regular training. If for some reason, any adult student did not receive the email containing the first lesson, [Click here for Lesson 1](#) to begin the training, and get some assistance with your email program so you don't miss future mailings. If by chance you do not have a PDF reader, [Foxit Reader](#) and [Acrobat Reader](#) are free downloadable readers.

## STUDENT VOICES



Many of us are in our "weekend warrior" phase, not exactly out of our prime, but not teens anymore; and many of us are in middle age or elderly. We're all inundated with the cultural imperative to stay young at all costs, but usually without serious consideration of what the real values of youthfulness are. We "know" about eating right, getting plenty of sleep, and doing regular exercise, and we're students at The Peaceful Dragon, so that must mean we've got it right, right? Well, like everything else, it depends. If we're really doing all these good things for ourselves, then we're probably okay. But if not, there's a new wrinkle in the picture; and what about our friends and loved ones? Shouldn't we try to help them have better lives as well?

Consider the following information, from [www.Foodconsumer.org](http://www.Foodconsumer.org). A recent study shows that tests of how a person walks, how well they maintain balance, and how good their gripping strength is, among other things, can predict Alzheimer's disease. People who maintain physical health may delay or prevent the onset of dementia or Alzheimer's. The study, conducted by Group Health Cooperative and the University of Washington, showed, contrary to expectation, "...that physical changes [preceeded] declines in thinking."

The study recommended that small changes in physical function should be taken as a sign to pay attention to your physical health. This large study also reinforced the link between physical and mental well-being and emphasized that it's never too late to start exercising. Obviously, people who are already in good physical health generally have a better opportunity to avoid cognitive decline in later life. However, as we know, everything is a continuous process. Why wait until you, or a friend or loved one, begins to notice some kind of decline? Now is the best time to focus on your well-being. For the full article, and more links and information, go to [http://www.foodconsumer.org/777/8/Staying\\_physically\\_fit\\_prevents\\_Alzheimer\\_s\\_disease.shtml](http://www.foodconsumer.org/777/8/Staying_physically_fit_prevents_Alzheimer_s_disease.shtml).

*The link and the suggestion for this article were forwarded by Kathy Crowe – the ed.*

# WISDOM OF MA FOREN

## One Error At A Time



In the Shaolin Temple, they use the study of the arts to sharpen the mind. The truth of the matter is that few people are able to see themselves. We can see all the world, but we cannot see ourselves. Through the study of the Kung Fu our mind becomes focused as never before. It is a way for us to look at ourselves and find where we are lacking attention in our kung fu structures.

The art demands full attention to the moment. By learning how to stay in the present we see all the shortcomings of our forms or techniques. When you are training in a new form or technique, ask your Teacher where he/she sees your errors. Most likely the Teacher will name a number of errors. Pick ONE – not two or three – but ONE error and focus on it. Look for it all the time, every time you move ask yourself, is the error there? If it is, correct it and keep doing this until that error vanishes. Only then will you go on to the next error on your list.

We improve inch by inch, not yard by yard. This is a common problem with new students: they expect too much too soon. Changing a lifetime of bad habits cannot be done away with in a day or a year. It will take time to retrain yourself to see clearly. Up to now your mind has been commander of you, now you are trying to make yourself the master of your mind. This is the hardest task you will ever undertake in life.

As each error fades away you will notice your forms and techniques becoming better and better. It is a slow process, but there is really no other way than slow and careful examination of the mind. Just enjoy the challenge to rid yourself of one error at a time and, before long, you will transform yourself to an awake and aware martial artist. This new-found awareness of self will serve you well in living a new way, seeing things you have overlooked for your entire life. You will be reborn in your mind, and when the mind changes so does the world we live in. This is the purpose of our training. Now go find an error and hang on to it until it is no more.

*This is the ninth installment of selections from Grandmaster's email. Any student who wishes to receive email directly from Grandmaster Ma Foren should visit <http://kungfu.org/requestform.shtml> and include a brief thanks for Grandmaster's generosity. Make sure the punctuation and spelling on your email address are correct. And very important, 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 CLASSIFIEDS

PLANNING TO BUY something for the house or garden, indulge a favorite pass-time, 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.





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](http://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](mailto:maibu@carolina.rr.com). Pay at the front counter, by the month.

## SAVE on Quality Martial Arts Supplies and Weapons

Get 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

## 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.