



# THE PEACEFUL DRAGON

## *Newsletter*

MARCH – April 2004



### *On the Dragon Path*

#### Forgiveness – a Martial Arts Practice?

By Stuart Edmondson



**Is forgiveness necessary?** Think about the times in life that were the most hurtful. What were the circumstances? High school and junior high school were a minefield of insults, failures, exclusions – how would one ever be fully accepted and fit in? Perhaps the work place offers an insensitive boss or coworker who places fear above courtesy and respect. How about that failed romance or marriage? Even our own family may have been representative of a stressful place in which to grow up, rather than the ideal of nurturing and love. The common experience in any of these conditions is that once we are deeply hurt, at some level we never forget. We respond to life differently. Our view of the world is shaped by our hurt. Hurt is something we own almost as if it is a value in itself. Indeed, our experience of our own being as well as how we function in life is also molded by such experiences. The response may be one of motivation or suppression, but almost always there is a loss of peace and contentment. An experience of separation from real intimacy underlies relationships that remind us of our hurt. Is forgiveness necessary? No it's not. It's a choice. We are only responsible for our choices.

**What is forgiveness?** Forgiveness is usually thought of as the act of letting someone else off the hook for something they did. Of course we think that what they did was wrong. In that light, it can be held over someone as a reason for distrust, separation, and even as a source of power. A softer kinder interpretation is that we offer healing between ourselves and someone else when we forgive them. In either case, it seems to be something we do for someone else whether as a favor or as a genuine act of kindness. But, consider this. Forgiveness is realistically something we do to ourselves rather than for someone else. In fact, we can forgive someone else without his or her knowledge and even forgive someone who is deceased. It is an inner process that changes the relationship of hurt between others and us regardless of any known affect on others. It is a change of view in how we are in the context of what was hurtful in the past. Forgiveness changes the past. The past is our personal inner view of history. No, it does not mean that others are relieved of responsibility for whatever they may have done. It does translate what others may have done in a way that we can have a different view of reality. The context of whatever occurs in the past is relieved of blame and consumed with self-responsibility. Forgiveness is a process of hard inner work. First it requires that a decision be made that there is value in forgiveness over the past relationship of hurt and blame. Second it takes a commitment to work at it every day. Recall how in meditation practice, our attention wanders and how a persistent blameless effort is constantly put forth to bring the mind back to focus. The same type of effort is required for forgiveness. As the memory and emotions of hurt arise, one must embrace it with responsibility then release it, as old unneeded business. Release is like refocus of attention during meditation. Tough work!

**What does forgiveness have to do with martial arts?** If the process of forgiveness works, the suggestion here is that one is relieved of hurt and suppression of a free spirit. Hopefully, the result is that one sees events and others through a clearer more transparent lens. To be free of the typical reactive approaches to events and people should promote more effective responses in real time. It is the undermining subversive arising of automatic responses that puts a dim shade over what is before us. It colors everything before us with a familiar sense of

what was, not what is. We hesitate and are reluctant to engage what is really before us as a new fresh relationship or interaction. The undercurrent of hurtful associations of past memories only produces reactions of an automatic nature. I submit to the reader that our feet and hands are faster when we carry less heavy emotional baggage. We observe closer those things around us and learn faster and better. Our minds are more attentive to real time events without the distractions of those old views associated with past memories of hurt. Such reactions, like chains on our wrists and ankles, inhibit our flexibility to be immediate, accurate and appropriate in our response for doing, and in being, our best.

I think that forgiveness is more than just a good idea. I've been challenged by the need to forgive and still seeks to involve the process in daily life. The good news is that there truly are personal benefits from the process of forgiveness. As a final thought to promote your interest -- some of the benefits are quite unexpected.

## Special Announcements

### YOUNG DRAGONS RAISE FUNDS FOR WORTHY CAUSE

The Young Dragons are selling Community Books to raise money for new Lion costumes. Filled with great restaurant and fast food coupons, they are a wonderful value at \$10.00 a book. These are the new ones since the old ones expired at the end of February. Please help our young students reach their goal. See Shawn Hammond or Dan Weaver for books and more information.

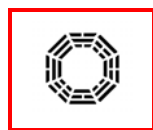
### NEW YEARS PHOTOS A WONDERFUL RECOLLECTION

At long last, new year photos are up at <http://thepeacefuldragon.com/2004newyear/2004.shtml>. Many thanks to Lawrence Boblas, [abldesign@carolina.rr.com](mailto:abldesign@carolina.rr.com) for his ever-thoughtful camera work and to Kathy Crowe for her snappy editing. Enjoy!

## Workshops and Events

### PAKUA STAFF WORKSHOP

**G**ET ENERGIZED AT THIS UNIQUE WORKSHOP WITH RENOWNED MASTER PARK BOK NAM!



Everyone can benefit from the tremendous energy, health and self-defense skills that the ancient Chinese art of pakua offers. Master Park addresses principles of energy (qi) development, movement and mental focus that are universal to all martial arts, and introduces the long staff, a traditional pakua weapon. The two-day workshop is open to people of all ages and levels of experience. No one should miss the opportunity to study with this world-renowned master!

**When:** Friday, April 23 (5 -10pm) focus on chi kung for health, plus staff and self-defense fundamentals; Saturday, April 24, (11am - 5pm) learn advanced staff applications.

**Price:** If pre-registered: Public \$150 for one day, \$260 for both. Peaceful Dragon student \$100 for one day, \$180 for both. At the door add \$20. Cash or money order only please. **\*Note: Must bring full size wooden staff, elbow and knee pads.** You'll need the staff for Grandmaster's workshop later this summer. Other protective pads optional.

### LEARN TO MAKE VEGAN DESSERTS

**I**f you've wished you could make scrumptious vegetarian desserts to perfectly compliment your own efforts in the kitchen, this is the workshop for you! Chef Geoff Bragg will focus on dessert recipes and techniques chosen to finish your meals the way the were meant to be: a little sweet, and very healthy!



**When:** Sunday, March 14 (1 – 4pm).

**Price:** \$30 for the public; \$25 for students. After Wednesday (10<sup>th</sup>) add \$10, so sign up early.

## CACMA TOURNAMENT COMING



The Sil Lum Mountain Invitational Kung Fu Tournament features events for tai chi and kungfu stylists. Participate or go out and support those who are.

**When & Where:** on March 27, 2004 near historic Kings Mountain, NC at the Bessemer City Middle School off I-85 South.

**More Info:** visit the [Sil Lum Mountain Kung Fu](#) website for details and online registration.

*What's Up?*

## LONG-SLEEVE T-SHIRTS ON SALE

After seeing the cool shirts that Sifu Bob Sbarge's students wore at the annual mountain tai chi retreat last fall, we knew we had to have 'em. 100% black cotton with white graphics, these shirts are now selling for \$19 adult sizes and \$16 kids sizes. Part of the proceeds will go to help purchase martial arts equipment for the outdoor training area. Trust me, everyone will want one or two!

## Sifu's MONTHLY LECTURE

On March 3 Master Sbarge will explore [Connecting Chi Development Through Feng Shui, Tai Chi and More](#).

On April 7 the topic is [The Value of Herbs, Vitamins and Dietary Supplements](#).

Both lectures will present valuable information from our Sifu's own study, training and experience, and as always participation from the audience is expected and encouraged. Do your best to be there, [first Wednesday](#) of the month, Studio A, 7:30pm.

## "TEA AND TALK" GROUP SEEKS NEW MEMBERS

Are you one that finds the Classics too much trouble to get into? The reading is less challenging when we talk about it together. Our discussion group meets every other [Tuesday, at 6pm](#); the next meeting is [March 2](#). We'd love to have you join us. Who knows what insights may come?

## GARDEN CLUB GROWS MORE THAN VEGGIES



The garden club has already been planning for Spring with compost delivered and tilled into the front bed; thanks Chuck and David. The young dragons are going to help seed lettuce, spinach, kale, etc. on Wednesday, March 3, weather permitting and we hope for their continued involvement.

A new sprinkler system is needed, and we have several other projects to do throughout the season as funds become available, like raising some landscape beds to help with drainage, and planting more shrubs, perennials, and annuals. Anyone who would like to help, whether it's a little or a lot, please see Leslie Carlson or anyone in the garden club.

## Young Dragons



**Congratulations to those Young Dragons who got promoted on Feb 14!**

### White Sash 2nd Level

Austin Mahoney  
Aidan Murphy-Booth  
Hayley Miller  
Jessica Spencer

Nathan Mahoney  
Nicholas Sappe  
Sydney Medlin  
Bradley

### Yellow Sash

Justine Seibel  
Jessica Harris  
Ray Oram

Wade Harris  
Myles Harris  
Mike Oram

### Purple Sash 2nd Level

Joshua Carr

All Yellow Sash and above Young Dragons, please bring your rubber staff to all classes.

All Green Level Young Dragons, please have your equipment ready for the month of April.

## Volunteering

### Knock Knock...



Hard to believe it, but Spring is just a few weeks away and we are still hibernating! We've dragged out the list of recurring maintenance items and need people willing to take on specific weekly or monthly

responsibilities for the upkeep of our school. Things like vacuuming, cleaning the locker rooms, and outdoor maintenance are among many requiring attention. Please see David Block, Shawn Hammond or Tim Myers to volunteer your time and keep our facility as beautiful as the day it opened.

We also need a well organized individual who can help Terry Lorenz co-captain the Office Committee. Will it be *You*? Consider this your opportunity, your knock on the door to get more involved, and of course it's good training too.

## Dragon Classified Ads



graphic design  
illustration  
web design

info@kathycrowe.com  
704-338-9855  
2029 Kenilworth Avenue  
Charlotte, NC 28203  
www.kathycrowe.com

## 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.

## PACKAGE PLANS FOR MASSAGE THERAPY AT THE PEACEFUL DRAGON:

Because we believe that regular massage treatments are a must for good health and well being, we are pleased to offer package plans for discounted treatments. Choose either of the following 2 options:

Buy 6 treatments and receive the 7<sup>th</sup> one FREE. That's a 14% savings per massage!

Buy 3 treatments and receive the 4<sup>th</sup> one at half price. That's a 12.5% savings per massage!

Purchase 30 or 60 minute blocks on either program and transfer your tickets to anyone as a welcome gift. We gladly accept credit cards for your convenience. (Not to be combined with other offers.)

## 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

## Pathways

Grandmaster, founder of our parent school the ACCS, reminds us that the intent of practice is to excel beyond the teacher. He offers the following seven expectations for the sincere student.

- 1) Maintain skill – but good character is more important than highest skill;
- 2) Recognize teachers with traditional red envelope;
- 3) Communicate with each other and teachers, share and develop skill and knowledge;
- 4) Follow *Wu-de*;
- 5) Practice one art or many – arts support and reinforce each other;
- 6) Love of training is more important than promotion;
- 7) Maintain tradition, promote arts, don't water down.