



The Peaceful Dragon

Newsletter

October - November, 2003

Message From Master Eric Sborge Director and Head Instructor



As a student here you most surely understand the numerous benefits of training in tai chi, kungfu, qigong, yoga and meditation. You're well aware that these practices offer significantly better health, more energy and a greater sense of balance and well being that are essential for a happy and productive life. If you didn't believe in the benefits you wouldn't have joined our classes, and you wouldn't waste your hard-earned money on tuition.

Why then, if you are like many students, do you go through periods or phases where you don't practice your chosen arts very much? Why do you make excuses until you convince even yourself that you don't have time to make it to even a couple of classes a week, or you don't have time to practice for just one hour a day — even a half hour a day -- at home? We use the term "practice" because achieving lasting health and finding long-term contentment and meaning in life aren't automatic — they require practice.

Have you achieved so much health, satisfaction and balance in your life that you don't feel the need to practice? Wonderful, you can stop practicing . . . for a week or so. But don't wait longer than that, because that's about all the time it takes for the down-hill slide to begin.

More likely you stop your practice not because everything is just right, but because you're suddenly more out of balance than usual. Maybe it's physical imbalance: All of a sudden your body hurts more than usual, or you feel exceedingly tired and low on energy, or you have a chronic injury. Or maybe it's a lifestyle imbalance: You got promoted and now have to work more hours, or the kids have new activities that you have to cart them off to. Or maybe it's a mental imbalance: You just feel lethargic or bored — or conversely maybe you're so enamored of your new lover or so pleased with your new grand children that you're just too happy to waste time with something like taking care of yourself.

If most of us are honest with ourselves, one of the above situations or a similar one fits us at times. The reason is simple: We're all the same animal — lazy human. To overcome this laziness requires commitment and discipline, but since we don't inherently have discipline we find it hard to "discipline" ourselves to develop it.

What can we do to develop the focus and discipline to stay with our training practice no matter what obstacles life throws in the way? Here are a few suggestions:

1. Find a training partner — you can fool yourself any time but it's harder to fool someone who's helping to protect you from yourself.
2. Develop a regular schedule. Don't just say, "I'll go to class twice a week and practice for 30 minutes a day at home, but rather choose your regular days to go to class and choose your regular times to practice at home. Work the rest of your life around those times.
3. Create an iron-clad agreement with yourself: If you miss your training session for any reason, the very next session you must add on the time missed from the previous one.
4. Join frequent extra seminars, lectures, practice sessions or similar activities outside of your normal routine — you'll usually come away with new ideas and methods that will motivate you and inspire you to practice harder
5. Regularly remind yourself of the real benefits that you get from your practice, and scare yourself with the thought of what the opposite of those benefits would be.

Special Announcements

Tuition Agreement Update

Reminder: Anyone who joined The Peaceful Dragon before the Tai Chi Festival (Sept. 13) needs to see George Lu to update your Tuition Agreement. Though you have until December, please do it sooner rather than later so there isn't a big rush at the end of the year.

Monthly Lecture/Discussion Series

Wed., Oct. 1, 7:30PM. "Proper Breathing Technique: Never Underestimate Its Importance"

Wed., Nov. 5, 7:30PM. "Taoism, Buddhism and Confucianism: The Philosophical Trinity Underlying Traditional Chinese Arts, Including Martial Arts."

Workshops and Events

Fourth Annual Mountain Tai Chi
Retreat Just Weeks Away

October 10 – 13, 1pm Fri – 4pm Mon

Everyone who has been to any of the previous three retreats knows why this is a big deal. There is something about practice and about insight into practice that changes more or less noticeably as soon as you commit to spend more than an hour or two. This wonderful retreat is full to the brim with opportunities to deepen your



understanding and skill; and Sifu generally has a surprise or two to offer those who trek up the mountain.

The Ch'ang style long tai chi solo form, qigong forms, push hands and partner exercises, plus tai chi broadsword and self-defense applications for more advanced students will be presented. Other daily practice will include Buddhist and Taoist methods of meditation, breathing exercises and Chinese yogic stretching.

Meals (vegetarian option) plus comfortable lodging in the YMCA Blue Ridge Assembly facility are included (prices are based on double occupancy; for single room add \$100). Directions are available at [The Peaceful Dragon](#) or by calling the Assembly directly at (828) 669-8497. **Space is still available, \$399 for students and \$499 for the public. Take advantage of a family discount (2 or more**

people) and save \$30. A 50% deposit is required at the time of registration with the balance due by Thursday, October 9th (check, cash or credit card accepted.) Absolutely no payments can be refunded for any reason unless The Peaceful Dragon must cancel the retreat, in which case you will receive a full refund.

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Tai Chi Judge's
Training & Certification

November 1, Saturday, 9am – 5pm

Whether you think you will ever judge a tai chi competition or not, learning about judging will add tremendous insight into your own practice. Learn how to judge tai chi competitions. The seminar, sponsored by U.S. Chinese Kuoshu Federation and the Carolinas Association of Chinese Martial Arts, covers forms, weapons and push-hands events.

Topics include complete rules review, discussion of evaluation and scoring, participation in mock forms and push-hands events as a competitor, judge, scorekeeper and timekeeper; hands-on experience with forms and weapons evaluation sheets, and the 5 point must system for scoring push hands.

The training is open to all tai chi players. Teachers or players with 8 years of experience, including at least 3 years of weapon study, who complete the training will receive Level One Certification. **The cost is \$50. Please register and pay at the counter by October 26.**

8th Annual Fall Classics
Kung Fu Tournament

November 15, Saturday, 10am until . . .

Hosted by the Hung Gar Kung Fu Academy in Mooresville, this event is special because a portion of the competition fees goes to support Structured Athletics for Challenged Children, a very worthy cause that has been championed by Sifu Panico for many years. **The tournament is once again at Lake Norman High School, 186 Doolie Road in Mooresville. The fee is \$50 for unlimited competition.** Questions, call 704.663.6305.

Day-Long Meditation

November 16, Sunday, 9am – 4pm



Everybody can benefit from the respite of a day away from everything except a quiet and rejuvenating reacquaintance with the self. Sifu Eric Sbarge, head instructor at *The Peaceful Dragon*, will lead an

extended session of Chan (Zen) meditation. The meditation is open to everyone regardless of experience. Take advantage of discussions and explanations on meditation principles and methods, plus experience intensive practice of meditation. The price includes vegetarian lunch. **Student early-bird price is just \$29 and for the public, \$39. After Nov. 12 add \$10.**

What's Up?

Cooking Workshop With Chef Geoff

October 19, Sunday, 1 – 4pm

Vegetarian food doesn't have to be outlandish and cutting edge or plain and dreary either; you can think "inside the box" and enjoy great dishes. Lots of great vegetarian dishes come from Asian traditions, but what about some of our American traditions? The Peaceful Dragon's own Chef Geoff will take a new look at old favorites and learn how to make them vegetarian. For example, when's the last time you had a really good vegetarian "meatloaf"? Here's your chance to learn how to cook several great items and eat a lot of good vegetarian food, too!

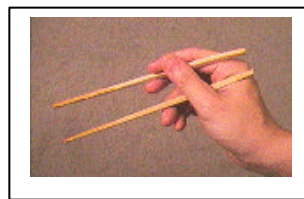
Early-bird price (before October 16): \$30; later, add \$10. Space is limited so make your reservation

early. Enjoy Chef Geoff online at www.aroundcarolina.com/food.

Final International Series Gourmet Dinner Features Far East

October 22, Wednesday, 7pm

If you missed the first three dinners in this series, you still have a chance to find out what all the excitement for the food and praise for Chef Geoff is all about, but hurry because previous dinners in the series sold out quickly. **Tickets are \$30 per person.**



Chef Geoff's culinary destination will be Far East Asia. This includes Korea, Japan, Mongolia and North East China. Unlike the other cultures we've explored, these

are a people whose way of life has been to get the absolute most out of each and every ingredient. Life on the mainland is tough. Farmers usually find themselves hovering somewhere between drought and flooding. The art of preservation is one that keeps the society alive in this part of the world. The Japanese, on the other hand, have made the simplicity of their food an art. Their food embodies the Zen philosophy that is at the root of their culture. Sharing the food of these cultures is a memorable experience!

Fundraisers have been a big success!

Thanks to everyone who worked to make our recent fundraisers effective. **The money will be used to pay for equipment and construction of our outdoor training area and a meditation walkway into the woods.**

Young Dragons

Young Dragons did an excellent job with demonstrations at the recent Annual Tai Chi Festival. Many people especially enjoyed this part of the festivities. It's great to see so many new faces, a sign that our Young Dragons program is growing. In fact, a 4 – 6 year old class has been added on Saturdays from 12 – 12:30pm!

The next Young Dragons testing will be on October 4 at 2:45pm. Please watch the newsboard for

additional information about test results and other events.

Volunteering

A Day of Landscaping and Thou...?

November 8, Saturday, 10:30am – 4:30pm

It'll be a grand way to take the air on a gorgeous Carolina Fall day. Our main goal is to mulch and complete the walking trails and we hope everyone can help for at least part of the day. (Rain date will be Nov 15). Come one, come all with your shovels, gloves and wheelbarrows!

Dragon Classified Ads

NOW brand Vitamins and Herbal Supplements are available at a 20% discount to students. The current catalog is available in Studio A. Place your order at the front counter by the end of each month, shipments arrive in about ten days.



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Special Request from CACMA

The Peaceful Dragon is one of the founding members of CACMA, the Carolinas Association of Chinese Martial Arts.

This essential organization not only works to educate the public and promote martial arts activities, but provides many valuable benefits to members as well. Sifu Anthony Stephenson, President of CACMA, is working hard to increase membership and participation. **Individual memberships are \$20 per year** and offer benefits such as ID cards, logowear, tournament, seminar and special event discounts, vendor discounts, training and certification for event judging. The discounts alone could offset the fee.

Memberships for Schools and Corporations are \$50 per year and include newsletter advertising, free listing on the CACMA website with a link to their business site and other benefits related to the special activities of CACMA.

Even more exciting is the chance to become part of the CACMA Team, possibly even with corporate sponsorship, which would help pay the way to Baltimore each year. Our goal is to have as much involvement from schools and local businesses as possible.

You can join CACMA via convenient online application and electronic payment. Or print out the application and follow the directions for mailing it along with your check or money order. Even sign up at the next CACMA-sponsored event. Don't delay, please check it out at www.mhkungfu.com/CACMA/cacma.html

My Peaceful Dragon Experience

All students are encouraged to share their stories in this column. The editor can help present your piece and include a picture or graphic to make it extra nice. Give your work to George, or send it directly to bm@carolina.rr.com

Pathways

"Many of life's circumstances are created by three basic choices: the disciplines you choose to keep, the people you choose to be with, and the laws you choose to obey."

—Charles Millhuff

