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2014 and 2015 Winner of TWO Charlotte Observer Reader Awards!

- Best Martial Arts Studio
- Best Yoga Studio

Like us on Facebook: http://www.facebook.com/ThePeacefulDragon

May Holidays!
National Salad Month

1st Mother Goose Day
4th Star Wars Day
8th No Socks Day
13th Frog Jumping Day
16th Love a Tree Day
18th Int’l Museum Day
23rd Lucky Penny Day
28th Memorial Day
As a student and practitioner of Zen for the past 45 years, I’ve studied Zen’s tenets and beliefs carefully and I think I’ve found a way to simplify them into one over-riding tenet. And then tenet is – simplify.

Much of our unhappiness and discord comes from too much busyness, too much complexity, too many things, too much complication.

You don’t have to take your kids to 22 activities each week, you choose to. You don’t need to kill yourself at a job so you can have three cars and a giant house, you choose to. You don’t have to be responsible for your parents and siblings and children and pets and HOA and PTA and your neighbor’s too, you choose to.

Chances are your very mind is too full of thoughts and worries, and needs to be emptied and simplified.

Of course other Zen tenets help us to see the merit behind this path toward simplification: Let go of attachments, live more in the moment, be mindful, cultivate compassion for all beings instead of discriminating between friend or foe, realize the wisdom of emptiness.

I probably could have simplified all of the above into a short three-line Haiku or something, but as I said up front, I’m a student of Zen, not a master.

Off now to practice.

“Simplify, simplify.”
— Henry David Thoreau
Upcoming Events

Shaolin Workshop with Master Guolin Shi
Fri-Sun, May 4th-6th

Nicknamed the “Iron Arhat”, Venerable Guolin Shi was the former head monk and teacher at China’s famed Shaolin Temple who is world-renowned for his expertise in all facets of Shaolin training. He is a long-time friend of The Peaceful Dragon, and while he rarely travels from his own Overseas Shaolin Temple in New York, he has led near-annual workshops here at The Peaceful Dragon.

Shaolin includes the practices of Chan (Zen) meditation, qigong (energy work), internal and external forms of kung fu, and much more. This comprehensive workshop is ideal for students who have at least some experience in tai chi, kung fu or qigong, though beginners with no experience are still welcome and can surely benefit from it.

Workshop hours: Friday 6-9pm; Saturday 9-5pm; and Sunday 10-4pm.

Early-bird savings before April 9: Public $299, Peaceful Dragon introductory-level students and their families $229, Peaceful Dragon mastery-level students $199. After April 9 add $25. Please register at our front service counter or call to register at (704)504-8866.

Children’s Class with Master Guolin Shi
Saturday, May 5, 12-1pm

Master Guolin will teach a special one hour Children’s Class our little and young dragons on Saturday, May 5 from 12-1pm.

Master Guolin is the former head coach of the famed Shaolin Temple. In 1992, he led a demonstration team to the U.S. to introduce Shaolin Kung Fu. In 1995, he founded the Shaolin Temple Overseas Headquarters in Flushing, NY. Fascinated by the diversities of culture and religion in the United States, he believes that Shaolin heritage can benefit everyone. In September of 2013, he began teaching at the new Shaolin Temple Overseas Headquarters in East Northport (Long Island) New York.

Sign up today for this exciting opportunity.
Early Bird Special is just $25! After April 9th add an additional $10.
Children 8 years and older, Green Sash and above, are welcome to attend the entire weekend workshop.
Adult Block A Testing  
Saturday, May 12, 11am  
Makeup Testing Wednesday, May 23, 6:30pm

Good luck to all of our testing adult and teen students. Please turn in your testing application at the front counter no later than one week before your chosen testing date.

Charlotte Asian Festival  
Saturday, May 19, 11am

The Peaceful Dragon is honored to be invited to perform the opening Dragon Dance and a martial arts demonstration for this year’s annual Asian Festival on May 19th starting at 11:00am. Bring the whole family to enjoy Dragon Boat races, vendors, and more. For more information about the festival, please see their website.

Student Appreciation Barbecue  
Saturday, June 9, 2-6pm

To thank you for your dedication and hard work as students or family members supporting our students, The Peaceful Dragon welcomes you to our annual barbecue. We’re providing all the food and drink for this family-fun bash!

The barbecue will be held right here at The Peaceful Dragon. Come out with the whole family and enjoy sports, games, water gun fights — or just a relaxing afternoon in the shade of our patio.

This event is totally FREE for the whole family, and will be held rain or shine. Please register at our front counter by Wednesday, May 30 so we will have a head count for how much food to prepare.
Meditation Retreat
Saturday, June 16, 12-6pm

Master Eric Sbarge, head instructor at The Peaceful Dragon, will lead this extended session of Chan (Zen) meditation, interspersed with relaxing and invigorating yoga and qigong as well as discussions on meditation principles, methods, and Zen philosophy. The retreat is open to and suitable for everyone regardless of experience levels.

Early-bird fee through June 2: Public – $75; Peaceful Dragon and affiliated-school students and family members just $39. After June 2 add $15. Please register at our front service counter or call (704) 504-8866. Bring a yoga mat and your meditation cushion or bench of choice; we have them for sale or a few available to borrow if you don’t have your own.

International Kuoshu Tournament in Baltimore
Fri-Sun, July 27-29

Join Master Sbarge and many of our instructors and fellow classmates at this weekend-long international tournament that highlights tai chi, pakua, hsing I, kung fu, shuai chiao and more, with weapons, forms, full-contact lei tai fighting, push hands, and much more. Divisions are for all ages from 5 on up, and beginner to advanced.

Whether as a competitor or spectator, you will come away from this weekend with a much greater appreciation for the variety of Chinese martial arts, and a better understanding of your own practice and how you can improve your skills and derive more benefits and satisfaction from your training. For tournament information see the USKSF site.

Our complete 2018 Special Events Calendar is available at http://thepeacefuldragon.com/specialevents.shtml. Mark your planning calendar now!

MAY BIRTHDAYS

1st Dawn Baker
5th Bree Sorrell
5th Katie Clinton
6th Troyce Doherty
8th David Block
10th James Gray
17th Cedrick McDonald
20th Don Steele
22nd John Chandler
24th William Sheets
26th Matt Lail
27th Balamir Sahin
27th Grace Zehringer
30th Mary Guba
31st Nancy Cook
31st Jordan Baker
31st Noah Brady
**Equipment Needed for Classes**

**Adults**
- **Shaolin** All Blocks: Full Sparring Equipment
- **Tai Chi** All Blocks: None

**Kids**
- **4-12 year olds**: White, Yellow, and Orange Sash: Short Stick
- **8-12 year olds**: Green Sash and Above: Full Staff, Double Sticks
Peaceful Dragon School News (All Real!)

Thank You to All of our Volunteers who Helped with Cleanup

Sifu would like to thank all of the students and family members who worked so hard to make our school shine. Your hard work is what makes so much possible. We appreciate it!

Plan and Start Saving NOW for The Peaceful Dragon’s 2019 China and Japan Tour!

The Peaceful Dragon is sponsoring an Asia tour for our students, family members and friends in October of 2019 – this will be our fourth tour, and each previous one has been fantastic.

This two-week tour promises to be a fantastic trip that will include practice in meditation and martial arts with locals, sightseeing, cultural excursions and events, and much more. Our tentative itinerary includes Japan for the first time – Tokyo and Kyoto (with its ancient Zen temples) – and the beautiful Chinese cities of Suzhou (called China’s Venice with the picturesque canals) and Hangzhou (the lake city), the spiritual Yellow Mountains, and the cosmopolitan heart of China, Shanghai.

The estimated cost for this all-inclusive custom tour with 4 and 5 star accommodations, all travel and excellent meals, admissions to cultural events, and the service of highly-professional English-speaking guides is between $3500 - $4000. We hope you can go – it’s a great investment for a lifetime of memories!

Send Us Your Event Photos or Short Video Clips

If you get some nice shots of Peaceful Dragon events please send them to Holly@thepeacefuldragon.com for display in our newsletter, social media pages and our new upcoming lobby-area TV!
Did You Know…

❖ Chinese is the most widely spoken first language in the world?

❖ TV shows and movies in China all have written subtitles – in Chinese? The reason is that the spoken dialects from one region to another are so different that people can’t understand the words, but the written Chinese characters are universal so viewers can read along as they listen.

❖ Recent Harvard studies show that clearing your mind, including through meditation, affects your genes and can lower your blood pressure?

Children’s Program News

A Message from Mr. George

For the 8-12 years old advanced group, we have started to integrate sparring into the beginning of each class. When we practice forms, the students are visualizing themselves fighting against the attackers. Sparring is a great opportunity to try out the different techniques, and see which techniques work well, and which do not. When we work with different partners, we get to experience the diversity of speed, size and combinations.

One of the most fundamentals is sparring is stepping. With every defense or attack move, the students will need to perform proper stepping. As the Adult full-contact sparring or UFC on TV, you will not see many fighters standing still and blocking. 99% of the time their feet are moving to avoid an attack, or stepping in to land some combinations.

Keep the training and be safe. We do require any sparring student to have full sparring equipment. I hope the Big Brothers and Sisters will set the example of great Kung Fu techniques, sportsmanship and physical fitness to the younger students.
Powerful Words

This month’s Powerful Word is Optimism. Optimism means looking on the bright side, believing and expecting that everything will work out for the best. Dr. Robyn’s letter to the parents discusses how to guide your children toward being more positive.

Student of the Month Recognition

Adult Student of the Month—Alex Japit
1st runner up—Danny Dang
2nd runner up—Kathy Campanelli

Alex trains hard, diligently working in tai chi, kung fu, and yoga, and is consistent and dedicated to his practice. He’s got a great attitude and attends all supplemental classes that he’s able to. Good job, Alex!

Child Student of the Month—Myra Hoellein
1st runner up—Gonzalo Cadrecha
2nd runner up—Zachariah Aboulhouda

Myra has demonstrated great leadership skills by helping with the 4-7 year old class. She shows good focus and attitude in and out of class. Keep up the great work Myra!

Disciple’s Forum

Acceptance
By Disciple Ingrid Lombardino

A common thread in both the Taoist and Buddhist traditions is accepting your circumstance and finding happiness regardless of external influences. Appreciate where you are, instead of lamenting where you want to be. If things are bad, accept it and move on. If things are good, acknowledge this, but don’t cling to it. For me, this idea is exemplified in verse 13 of the Tao Te Ching (Stephen Mitchells’ translation):
Success is as dangerous as failure.
Hope is as hollow as fear.

What does it mean that success is as dangerous as failure? Whether you go up the ladder or down it, your position is shaky. When you stand with your two feet on the ground, you will always keep your balance.

What does it mean that hope is as hollow as fear? Hope and fear are both phantoms that arise from thinking of the self. When we don’t see the self as self, what do we have to fear?

See the world as your self. Have faith in the way things are. Love the world as your self; then you can care for all things.

Success is part of the American dream, and is often defined as financial security, an abundance of material wealth, a respected place in one’s profession, and meeting or exceeding the expectations of one’s peers. Failure, on the other hand, “is not an option.” Failure means poverty, worthlessness, and disappointment. A successful person suffers from worrying about loss and must the striving to prevent this. A failure suffers from feeling shame and striving for change in status. Both have “shaky positions,” neither have “two feet on the ground.”

However, these definitions of success and failure are cultural constructs and can only hold power over you if you give in to them. In order to “stand with your two feet on the ground,” throw away your concern for success and failure. This does not mean to give up on life; rather, accept the causes and conditions that lead you to your current place, and to be happy there. Stand with two feet on the ground.

Hope and fear are also common plagues in our culture. In my line of work as a veterinarian, I encounter these emotions frequently. People rely on hope to comfort them when their beloved pet is sick, and they turn themselves into knots fearing what the outcome of a test or procedure will be. “Hope and fear are both phantoms,” however. Neither will change the outcome; neither will help you feel better in the long run. The Tao says hope and fear arise from thinking of the self – that is, we hope to avoid suffering and we fear encountering suffering. What if we don’t let ourselves get caught up in
how we do or don’t want to feel? Instead of hoping and fearing for things, consider accepting things as they are, and accept how you feel about it. In doing this we are able to shed our anxiety about a given situation, and “have faith in the way things are.”

Acceptance not only allows us to navigate the human experience as individuals, it also allows us to be more compassionate and open to the experiences of others. What one person values and finds happiness in may be repulsive to someone else. Instead of trying to change this person or oneself, instead of worrying about why there are differences, just accept that they exist, and you may find yourself more open, less judgmental, and possibly able to “care for all things.”

**Getting to Know This Month’s Disciple**

Each month, we will be asking our Disciple’s Forum writer to answer a few questions. Here are this month’s Disciple’s questions and answers:

**What was the last gift you gave someone?**
I bought my sister a plane ticket to Charlotte.

**What do you want to be when you grow up?**
Able to accept criticism as well as I accept praise.

**What do you do in your free time?**
Unreasonable amounts of physical training for ridiculous endurance events involving carrying heavy things around for a long time over great distance.

**What type of music do you listen to?**
Some of my favs are The White Stripes, Radiohead, Arcade Fire, David Bowie, and Roger Waters.

**What vacation location is on your bucket list?**
To me, bucket lists represent grasping and clinging to arbitrary desires that leads to Dukkha (suffering), so on principle I don’t keep them. However, I would like to see Madagascar if causes and conditions allow.
Students Ask Master Sbarge

Question: Can I learn how to defend myself with tai chi if I don’t join the sparring classes, but just practice push hands?

Answer: If you’re attacked by someone trying to push you, you can probably learn to defend yourself okay. But if they punch or kick you...

Mission Statement for The Peaceful Dragon

Our mission is to help each of our students reach his or her fullest potential for physical, mental and spiritual development through the teaching of traditional Asian health arts and martial arts. We accomplish this by offering the most authentic and effective curriculum, by providing the best possible service to our students and their families, and by maintaining a warm and caring family environment in which every student, guest, and staff member is treated with respect, dignity and love.
George runs two social clubs in Charlotte through Meetup.com:

http://www.meetup.com/North-Carolina-Mountain-Biking/

http://www.meetup.com/Charlotte-Pool-Shootin-Fun-Meetup/

Mountain biking, shooting pool, hiking, trying out new restaurants or cruising to the Bahamas!