I began this series of on-line lessons as a way to supplement our in-class discussions of the various principles, philosophies, history and methods of the arts we teach at The Peaceful Dragon.

This is the final lesson in the series (more of a summary than a lesson really), concluding four years (forty-eight months) of these lessons. If you have read each lesson carefully and done many of the various exercises accompanying the lessons, congratulations – you should now have a fairly broad overview of the essential concepts underlying the practice of these arts.

We’ve introduced Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism; feng shui principles; self-defense strategies; chi cultivation; goal-setting and success mindset; diet and nutrition; fasting and detoxification; Ch’an (Zen) meditation; breath work; tournament preparedness; physical fitness; and much more.

The fact that you’re receiving this forty-eighth lesson means you are already past the intermediate stages of your training and ready to move into more advanced practice. Particularly if you’ve read many of the books I’ve recommended with each lesson, you should feel confident that you are on the path to developing a good level of expertise on these subjects. You’re probably already in the top ten percent of practitioners in terms of overall knowledge and expertise.

**LOOKING FORWARD**

With the conclusion of these lessons, what’s the next step in your quest to continually learn more and attain greater mastery of these art forms?
First, it goes without saying that the most important thing to do is to continue attending your classes regularly and practicing your arts. Reading about kung fu, tai chi, meditation, yoga – well, that’s like reading about how babies get made – it doesn’t get any babies made, and it’s not as much fun. Coming to class and enjoying the camaraderie and motivation afforded by your classmates and instructors remains the core of your training, along with your independent practice. Even those of us who have completed years of training and covered our curriculum need to teach or continue attending classes or our skills stagnate and then begin to wane.

With that said, of course continued reading and study is invaluable in conjunction with your practice. By this stage of your training you have a good sense of your likes and interests, so pursue all the reading sources you can find via the library, book store, and of course on-line articles.

Except for those students who already were disciples when these lessons began four years ago, most students reading this are now on the verge of reaching disciple level. One of the biggest jumps in your advancement will be joining our Disciples Class. At that class you’ll learn the finer points of Shaolin and Tai Chi forms and applications, plus you’ll learn the internal styles of Pakua Chang and Hsing-I Chuan, both of which open up whole new worlds of chi cultivation and martial arts prowess. Unquestionably being in a class with only advanced disciple-level students and instructors will boost your progress exponentially.

What will I do with the extra day or two I now have each month that I won’t be using to write a new lesson? I’ll either be out fishing, or writing something else that’s martial arts related. Since I don’t fish, I guess that answers that question.