

THE DRAGON'S LAIR

NEWSLETTER OF THE IRON DRAGON KUNG FU AND KICKBOXING CLUB

91 STATION STREET, UNIT 8, AJAX, ONTARIO L1S 3H2

"IRON SPIRIT, IRON WILLPOWER, IRON BODY"



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(905) 427-7370 / ajaxdragon@hotmail.com / www.iron-dragon.ca

COMMENTARY

November 2011...a month I've been looking forward to and dreading at the same time.

As most of you know I will be leaving for the Philippines on November 12. I will be gone for 2 ½ weeks from Nov.12 – Dec.1. This will be the first time in 15 years that I have been away for more than a weekend! Fortunately, for the very first time I will have a number of qualified students to back me up while I am away. Please bear with them and give them the same level respect as you would give to me.

The purpose of my trip is to get married to my girlfriend Erna Marie. Economic realities have dictated our marriage be held in such a far off place. A 6-9 month immigration process will keep my wife from joining me here immediately but I promise you all that we will have a great big Iron Dragon welcome party once she finally arrives!



Erna Marie

Thank you all for accommodating this important personal trip. I will be adding two weeks of membership time to all memberships while I am away.

It has been a very busy time in my life and I have not had time to research and write as many original articles for this newsletter as I would have liked. This month I have bolstered the content of the newsletter by revising and recycling some articles from previous issues that you may have missed.

Now let us get to this month's newsletter. Enjoy!

TRAINING AT IRON DRAGON

Teaching as a learning experience

On pondering my upcoming trip to the Philippines I realized that I have been "micro managing" the club for a number of years and that it is time I allow some of the more senior members to take over a class on occasion. In fact, I remember doing the same thing many times as a student at Twin Dragon.

Teaching a class is in fact a learning experience in and of itself. It develops leadership skills and fosters a much deeper understanding of the techniques we teach at Iron Dragon. At the higher Sash levels – Purple and above it will be introduced as a requirement to attaining the next Sash levels Brown, Black and Gold.

In addition to being beneficial to a deeper understanding of technique getting higher ranking students to assist in teaching lower ranking students increases the student knowledge base in an exponential manner. As Sifu I need only concentrate on the new forms that I intend to teach to my higher ranking students while they in turn pass their knowledge to upcoming students who then pass their knowledge to the next generation of students.

When we first started our Traditional Hung Gar Kung Fu class I brought back the forms training that I had pretty much abandoned club since no one seemed interested in them. At the urging of long time member and Purple Sash Barry MacLeod I brought back the traditional forms training.

Of course, I had not trained forms in several years either and this necessitated me "relearning" the forms prior to passing them on to students. Fortunately my Sifu, David Lee had insisted that I master a form thoroughly before moving on to the next form. Over a grueling period of 7 years training I had mastered most of the forms David taught. Consequently, I was able to relearn the forms fairly easily although, my early forms students Barry and John will recollect several instances where I had to revisit a form and make changes after already passing them on! LOL!

Initially we started with one of the forms that came from our Twin Dragon Hung Gar lineage, Siu Nam Kune or Small Southern Fist. After I had taught this form to Barry and John, they in turn taught it to the next generation of students who then passed it on to the next. The success of this teaching method struck me one day as I saw student Randy Carter perform the Tiger Crane Fist Set almost flawlessly despite the fact that I had hardly ever instructed him in the form directly. Randy had learned the form almost exclusively from Barry and John with only minor corrections from me and yet here he was performing it almost to perfection!

Now after several years of teaching in this manner there are many students performing equally stunning renditions of many forms with almost no direct input from me. We have gone from practicing the one form Siu Nam Kune to where we now have Siu Nam Kune, Lau Gar Kune, Lau Gar Stick, Gung Ji Fook Fu Kuen, Tiger Crane, Five Animals Five Elements, Double Butterfly Knives, Heart Penetrating Palm and now Single Broadsword in various stages of learning by our Hung Gar student group!

Iron Dragon Members

Pat "Train Wrecka" Rhodes and Antonella "Killah" Muia get married!

October 23, 2011 marked a very special occasion at Iron Dragon. The first marriage of two Iron Dragon students that had met and built a relationship after meeting at our Kwoon!

Pat Rhodes and Antonella Muia trained at Iron Dragon for several years and Antonella remembers that they hardly ever even spoke to one another while training at the same club!

As it turned out, Pat was training for a fight one summer and was having difficulty finding someone to train with. By chance, Antonella happened to be at the club one night and offered to hold the focus mitts for Pat. From that point on there developed a friendship which then further developed into a romance which has now culminated in a marriage! Of course I (as usual) was the last to find out about this!

The two of them were kind enough to invite me to their wedding! Here are some photos of the event.

On behalf of Iron Dragon Kung Fu and Kickboxing Club I would like to say Congratulations Pat and Antonella!



The newly married couple share a toast before the reception



Ah, the first dance!



The happy couple with Antonella's parents





Antonella was escorted by her Dad



The wedding party

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE**LEGENDARY SOUTHERN SHAOLIN MASTERS****Ng Mui and the origins of Wing Chun Kung Fu**

Yim Wing Chun practicing on her Wooden Dummy

The overthrow of the Ming Dynasty by a powerful border tribe known as the Manchu in 1644, imposed the Ching Dynasty upon the Chinese populace. Oppression gave rise to much anti-Ching sentiment. Several underground rebel societies sought to restore the Ming Dynasty. Many of the rebels hid within the Shaolin Temples of Northern and Southern China and were aided in their activities by the sympathetic Shaolin monks. The Northern Shaolin temple was destroyed by government troops around 1674 as a result. Many of the monks escaped to the south and were absorbed by the Southern Shaolin temple.

Rebel activities continued in the Southern Shaolin Temple as the monks struggled to develop a new style of Kung Fu (based on efficient and effective techniques) that could be transmitted quickly to rebel fighters. At that point it could take over 10 years to learn the existing Shaolin Systems. There was a need for a system that could be learned in a shorter period of time. It is my belief based on the writings I have seen that this style was the predecessor of a style that was to become known as Wing Chun.

Around 1768, the Southern Shaolin temple was also destroyed by government troops because it was accused of harboring anti-Ching rebels. All but 5 of the Shaolin Masters were killed during the destruction of the temple.

One of the Masters, a nun by the name of Ng Mui had been heavily involved in the development of the new technique and continued to teach layman followers after she escaped the destruction of the Temple.

One of her students, a young woman by the name of Wing Chun had spurned a suitor and had been challenged to a fight as a result. Ng Mui trained Wing Chun and formulated a strategy so that a physically weaker fighter could outmaneuver a stronger opponent. Wing Chun easily disposed of the suitor with the techniques she had learned from Ng Mui.

Subsequently, Wing Chun refined the technique and taught it to her husband who then passed the technique on to his own students. Ng Mui named the technique Wing Chun Kung Fu to acknowledge the unique contributions made to the style by Yim Wing Chun. The style was then passed on to succeeding generations until Yip Man taught it to his student.....Bruce Lee!



Yip Man and his student Bruce Lee



Practising "Sticking Hands"

Hung Hei Goon - Founder of Hung Gar Kung Fu

As mentioned in the preceding article on Wing Chun, there was much anti-Ching sentiment both in the general population and within the walls of the Shaolin Temples. Another style that was created during the tumultuous period after the destruction of the Southern Shaolin Temple was Hung Gar Kung Fu.

The Abbott of the Southern Shaolin Temple (at the time of its destruction) was Gee Sin - a master of the Tiger System of Kung Fu. Gee Sin had sheltered a Tea Merchant by the name of Hung Hei Goon after he had a business conflict with Ching nobles and was forced into hiding.

Gee Sin trained Goon in the Tiger system (which was his expertise).

After the Shaolin Temple was destroyed and Gee Sin killed in its aftermath, Hung Hei Goon escaped into the countryside and began teaching the technique to the Ming rebels. He is said to have married a master of the Crane System by the name of Fong Wing Chun (not the same person discussed earlier in reference Wing Chun Kung Fu) and learned that system as well.

Hung then went on to synthesize what became known around 1805 as Hung Gar Fu Hok Pai - Hung Family Tiger Crane System which combined the best techniques from both systems. Many rebels were said to have taken refuge on the Red Opera boats of Southern China and it is here where Hung propagated his new style.

The style went on to become the most popular of the 5 Southern Chinese Kung Fu Family systems and is now practiced worldwide! Many different lineages of the style exist today and the forms practiced within these lineages are slightly different from one another. In one case, Ha Say Fu Hung Gar, the forms are completely different! Regardless, the underlying principles of the system remain the same.

The style as practiced at Iron Dragon Kung Fu club has descended from the Lam Sai Wing Branch and is descended further from the Chiu Kau lineage that exists to this day!

CROSSTRAINING

Weightlifting exercise of the month

Ez Curl Bar Incline Bench Triceps Extensions

All punching movements in the martial arts rely on the Triceps Muscles as the prime mover. In other words, the Triceps Muscles are the primary muscles used in extending the arm directly away from the front of the body.

All the muscleheads like to develop the showy Biceps muscles mainly because of the egotism attached to the aesthetics, but for punching efficiency this is the wrong approach! The Triceps push the punch but the biceps pull it back. By overdeveloping the Biceps and not training the Triceps to the same degree they are actually decreasing the speed and power of their punches!

Ideally (for those interested in punching power and speed) the Triceps should be developed to a greater degree and the Biceps developed to a lesser degree. Not very macho but reality nonetheless! LOL!

Now let's get to one of the best overall Triceps Exercises, the EZ Curl Bar Incline Bench Triceps Extension.

Load an EZ Curl Bar with a light weight that will allow 12-15 repetitions. Set an Incline Bench at a High Angle just less than 90 Degrees ...somewhere around 75 - 80 Degrees.

Now lie back on the bench and keep your elbows pointing straight up and hold the EZ Bar Curl by the short curved section of the bar. Lower the bar behind your head and then with no momentum lift it back up keeping the elbow up at all times. Only the forearm should move.

Don't lock out the elbow at the top of the movement but keep it slightly bent to maintain tension on your triceps for the whole movement and then pump out the repetitions till you get the 12-15 suggested reps.

DO NOT BOUNCE from the bottom of the movement. Many elbows have been ruined by this exercise due to bouncing up at the bottom of the movement.

Martial Arts in North American Pop Culture

Although Kung Fu arrived in North America in the 1800's along with the migrant Chinese workers who were brought in to build the Northern American railroads, the introduction of Kung Fu to North American popular culture began in the late 1960's with Bruce Lee playing the part of Kato in the short-lived TV series "The Green Hornet".



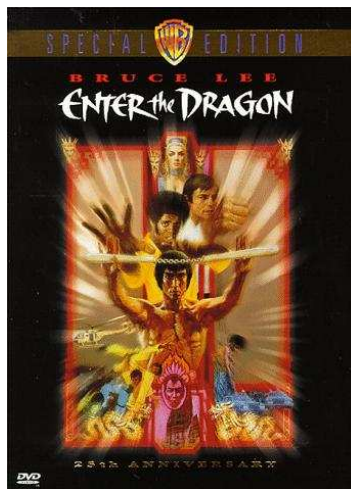
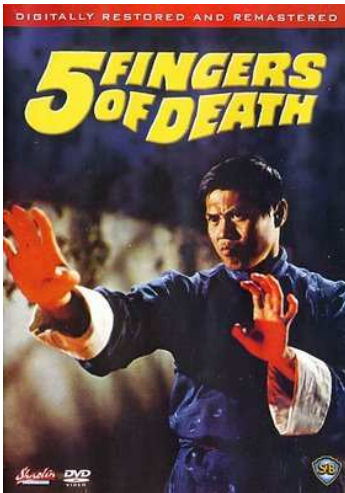
Bruce Lee as Kato in the 60's TV Series The Green Hornet

In early 1970 the movie "Billy Jack" became a monster hit. Its lead character Billy Jack used Martial Arts to reign in the "bad guys".



Tom Laughlin uses his Hapkido in "Billy Jack"

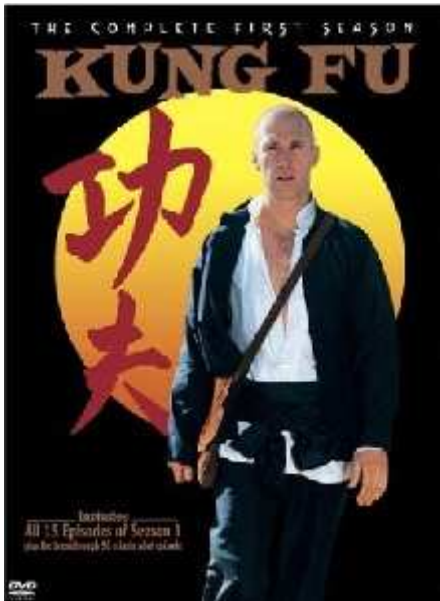
By late 1972, a wave of Kung Fu "chop socky" films swept the North American continent. It began with the low budget "Five Fingers of Death" (which made huge box office receipts) and culminated with the release in 1973 of Bruce Lee's "Enter the Dragon". The film established Kung Fu in North American popular culture and spawned a martial arts craze that went on for a half decade.



Martial Arts continue to be a part of North American cinema, although to a much lesser extent. Unfortunately the special effects wizards in Hollywood have created a sort of Hollywood martial art for the movies. This bears little resemblance to the original techniques and philosophies of the traditional arts.

Kung Fu Television Series - Circa 1973

1973 saw the release of the immensely popular "Kung Fu" television series. The story of a half Chinese half American Shaolin monk, presented the spiritual and philosophical side of the Chinese martial arts to North Americans for the first time.



Here is a clip from that series that illustrates the presentation of the Shaolin philosophy and wisdom:

<http://www.youtube.com/v/J5kBqrHphjo>

A little known fact is that Bruce Lee was originally cast as the lead character Caine but was considered too Chinese looking for the part! He was replaced by David Carradine, an accomplished actor with only rudimentary martial arts training!

A viewing of the 1972 pilot episode for this series is compulsory for all Green Sash applicants. Please see me for the next scheduled viewing at our club. This episode is highly regarded not so much for the fight scenes but for its presentation of the Shaolin ideals and philosophy that permeate the art to this day! I highly recommend it for your personal library! All 3 seasons of the television series are available commercially in DVD format.

Hong Kong Movie Industry 1972-1978

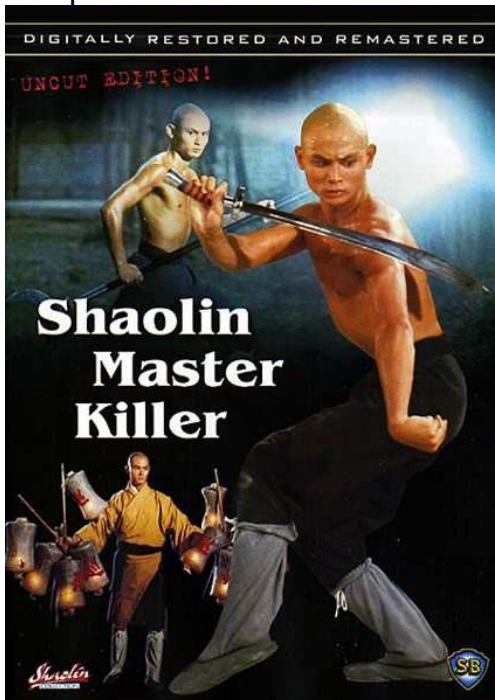
Shaw Brothers, one of the major movie studios in Hong Kong issued some of the most historically accurate films about the Shaolin Temple and more specifically Hung Gar Kung Fu. The film "Boxer Rebellion" (about the historical incident of the same name) features a portion of the 5 animals / 5 elements form of the Hung Gar System.



Here is that scene from Boxer Rebellion:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pajaAl43W7A>

"Master Killer" features authentic scenes of training that was done at the Shaolin Temple in the late 1700's.



Here is the cinematic trailer for Master Killer:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RVx1LW4Ca_c

"Martial Club" and "Challenge of the Masters" gives relatively accurate historical details regarding the transmittal of Hung Gar Kung Fu from Luk Ah Choy to Wong Fei Hung. All these aforementioned movie titles are not just technically and historically accurate but entertaining as well! I recommend all these titles to all my students. Seek out and add these titles to your DVD collection. They are readily available on EBAY at extremely low prices!

PROVERBS TO LIVE BY.....

“A closed mind is like a closed book; just a block of wood.”

(Chinese Proverb)

PONDER UPON THIS.....

Chinese wisdom, proverbs, traditions, etiquette and history were as much a part of the art of Kung Fu as the physical fighting techniques that were taught. In keeping with that tradition, it is hoped that this, one of many proverbs to come, will enhance our students' martial arts experience for many years. In this day and age where many cultures have come together we are fortunate to receive proverbs of wisdom from many different cultures. It is my intention to present proverbs of any culture that are relevant to our training goals. These proverbs are intended to foster a dialogue about some of the less obvious facets of our art. The proverbs are purposely kept simple so students will ponder their significance and relevance in their own lives and experiences. Going forward it is hoped that all students will contribute to our monthly proverb. Short proverbs or wisdom from any culture that are relevant to the goals of our Martial Arts Community / Club are welcomed. Email: ajaxdragon@hotmail.com to submit your contribution.

Upcoming Events

November 5, 2011 IRON DRAGON ANNUAL PICTURE DAY AND LUNCH

11:00 AM: Annual Picture Taking

Aidan Khan's mom Lesley will be coming in to take professional shots this year. Lesley has been more than generous with the discount she has given us on her usual fee.

Lesley's pricing for Digital Copies are as follows:

1 Group Portrait \$5

1 Individual Portrait with Sifu \$5

1 Group + 1 Individual Portrait with Sifu \$10

1 Specialty Shot i.e. Family Portraits \$5

Lesley will have forms ready the day of the shooting for you to fill out in order to keep everything in order. Cash would be best so that we can keep things running smoothly, since there will be about 100 people taking part.

1:30 PM: 16th Annual Iron Dragon Club Lunch

We will be having our annual lunch at Rotilicious Caribbean Restaurant Located within a block of the club. We will take orders before the event to assist the restaurant with their preparations.

November 6, 2011 - 3 pm

TWIN DRAGON FIGHT CARD - VAUGHN, ONTARIO

TWIN DRAGONS PRESENT LIVE KICKBOXING

Sunday November 6, 2011 - 3 pm - Paradise Banquet Halls

7601 Jane Street (Jane St. just south of Hwy #7)

Twin Dragon events are always a homecoming of sorts as our fighters get to participate in a first class event produced by the province's greatest Kickboxing promoters Mick and Martin McNamara.

For my students it is a chance to intermingle with current members at my home club Twin Dragon Yonge and Steeles! Come and watch some great fights and allow me to introduce you to my Sifu's Mick and Martin. They are after all your Si Gung's i.e. grandfathers in Kung Fu!!!

"Iron" Arnold Kitson will make his amateur kickboxing debut on this card while Shawn "Hammertime" Nanay will make a return to the venue that saw him win by a devastating KO of his opponent last year!

November 12 – December 1, 2011

SIFU OUT OF THE COUNTRY – SENIOR STUDENTS WILL RUN LIMITED CLASS SCHEDULE

I will be visiting the Philippines for a significant personal milestone. I will be marrying my girlfriend Erna Marie!

This will mark the first time that I have been away from Iron Dragon in 15 years. It will also be the first time that I have so many qualified senior students to facilitate my extended absence from the club! Thanks Shawn Nanay, Jeff Davis, Kyle Barriage, Dan , Arnold Kitson, Antony Laakso, Oscar Marticorena and Steve for volunteering to lead classes! Thank you to all Iron Dragon students for accommodating this important personal trip. I will be adding two weeks of membership time to all memberships while I am away.

The modified schedule for the period Nov.12- Dec.1/11 along with a list of designated class leaders and contact info is attached to the email I've used to send out this newsletter. Please review and make note of the changes.

UNTIL NEXT TIME.....

It's gonna be busy around here till the end of the year! I look forward to my return on December 1 to the Kwoon that has been a labour of love for not just me, but my students for over 15 years!

Until next time.....keep KUNG FU FIGHTIN'!

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ITiSzFp4arg>



Karl, Sifu