

October 2008

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# Inner Strength

## now

A *Blue Dragon School of Martial Arts* PUBLICATION  
FULFILLING THE NEED FOR PERSONAL SAFETY & WELLNESS

Currently the only official 8<sup>th</sup> Generation Lineage Disciple in our system, and given the name, *Ding Jian*, "Certain Strength", Mr. James O'Leary, is dedicated to sharing the art and helping others benefit as he has.

## A Powerful Tool

*The following article was excerpted from a Thursday Night Meditation Class Talk given by senior students at the Blue Dragon School. Here is Mr. James O'Leary sharing his insights about etiquette:*

"I remember clearly when Shifu Ahles began implementing more etiquette into the school. He had a vision of why he was doing it, but a lot of people that were here with me, that were students for a long time, completely misunderstood. I stuck with it, even though I had a really hard time at first.

I've always done what Shifu asked me to do, because I know something good will come out of it. So it's kind of a blind faith mentality for me, even though I did find it difficult. Now I've seen how students who came in after that point are different from students who came in before that. It's like you got a gift that we didn't get. I've seen the way you've developed differently than people who came before that shift, and I know it works. It's a very interesting thing when you

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## Celebrate Life... Again

Last month brought the seventh anniversary of the September 11, 2001 attacks and the senseless loss of thousands of lives. Though it is dwindling a bit, many still come to mourn the great loss we all endured. And in mourning, there is more suffering, as we relive the day in great detail, experiencing again, the pain. But when has focusing on a painful event ever made anything better? Focusing on pain brings more pain.

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In memory of  
Idanys Rodriguez

## A Powerful Tool

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start to be in that mindset where we salute each other and we respect each other, and you respect the space that you're working out in because you start to also respect your time here. I talked a little about this to the more advanced people working out tonight that I noticed when I'm making corrections to people, it's almost instantaneous that the correction is absorbed and now it's part of them. It

didn't used to be that way. Sometimes it would take something like twenty times saying the same thing to the same person to get them to make a change. Now I see consistently that people integrate change more quickly because they're listening and they're more focused. They're more *here*. I have the advantage of seeing the impact of it. I'm not looking to chastise anyone, I'm looking to help you understand it's a very

powerful tool. Shifu could care a less if you show respect to him. It's not about being a deity or something like that. It's about helping you to behave differently. It's about making your mind different because when you're mindful here you can't help but be mindful everywhere else. I know people who left this school because of the discipline. And, you know, think

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*"The year she died I decided when I was here, because she couldn't be here, that I was going to be her. I was going to workout like she wanted to workout because she couldn't be here to do it."*

## When A Loss Is A Gain

"I had the fortune of losing somebody I love in this school as a wake up call. I lost a great friend in Idanys Rodriguez. When she was here she worked out like a maniac. Every time she came here, she was completely dedicated to the art. She was obsessed with it. And I was always kind of, you know, I was here, and I worked hard when I wanted

and I didn't work hard when I didn't want to. The year she died I decided when I was here, because she couldn't be here, that I was going to be her. I was going to work out like she wanted to work out because she couldn't be here to do it. And that year was the best year of my life, in that way, because I realized when you're here and you

work out like a maniac and you work hard and you spend your hour here fully, it changes your life. When it's time to practice just say, "Yes, Sir!" and go to it. But if instead you kind of half-ass it all the time you'll never get that feeling. You won't get that taste, and you won't grow. You'll never get what you're here for."

—Mr. James O'Leary

## Celebrate Life... Again



Always  
remember.

*(Continued from page 1)*  
In the Spring of 2006, we lost our daughter, Ocean, just short of the age of 3. On the day after, as the reality of what happened was just starting to sink in, a little sign in her room stood out. It said, "Celebrate

Life." We still hang that sign by our front door so that we always remember. Yes, of course, there is a hole deep inside that may never be filled, but when the thoughts of the loss come up, it always feels better to focus on what we had, not what we lost. The joyous times. The great

fortune of ever having known our loved-one. We can focus on the "if only" all we choose, and it will surely cause us to feel more pain and misery. Or, we can Celebrate Life, and focus on the things that bring joy to our experience.

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# Q&A

**Q: How is a squatting exercise good for the heart?**

A: First of all, when we use the bigger muscles in the body, as in any form of squatting down, it doesn't take much to notice that the heart starts pumping harder and breathing increases. This is simply due to the fact that you are using more energy and therefore need to replenish it. How efficient your body is at

doing this is relative to how often it is repeated. It is one simple way to gauge cardiovascular health (how quickly do you run out of gas?).

However, there are even more important ways that the use of the big muscles in the legs help to maintain a healthy heart: *the heart muscle wasn't designed to work alone to pump the blood.* The heart is much like a spark plug, initiating the movement of the blood. It is *capable* of pumping the blood out through the arteries, and back through

the veins. However, proper breathing and movement have important parts in the return of the blood to the heart.

Deep breathing, the kind that reaches into the diaphragm, creates a natural pressure in the abdominal region that helps increase blood (and energy) circulation.

Additionally, the large muscles of the calves and thighs, when they contract, will literally squeeze and pump blood back to the heart. Want a healthy heart? Help your body work as a team.



*“We think in generalities, but we live in detail.”*

*Alfred North Whitehead*

## A Powerful Tool

*(Continued from page 2)*

about what they lost. They walked away from something very special.

This is a special space. The etiquette is tricky. I see it all the time. I see the way the people that came through the shift think differently than people that came before, and, without having experienced that, you may

not appreciate it.

It's like when you get better over two or three years, you have no idea what you've gotten. You need someone to show you a video tape of your progression to see how much you've changed. But then sometimes you catch yourself and say 'Wow, I can do that now. Wow, okay, so I'm good at that one

thing.' You don't realize you're good at twenty other things that you were horrible at. You don't always realize that progression. It's the same thing with etiquette. There's a progression. So, just lose yourself in it a little bit. I've seen some real strange things with etiquette. That ego gets involved. I see people try-

*(Continued on page 4)*

## updates

**The Retreat Experience:**

Students gave it their all with plenty of challenges all weekend at our First Annual Retreat, September 19-21, 2008 in the Poconos. With temperatures in the lower 40s in the mornings and mid-70s with blazing sun in the afternoons, it was a great example of “natural changes.” Even with it feeling like mid-

winter, going to their “Secret Spot” in the woods first thing in the morning was nearly everyone's favorite part.

**It's All About Your Attitude**

From beginner to advanced and ages ranging from 18 to 75, it was amazing to see the ability, attitude and effort of a group of over thirty participants successfully follow and experience (for hours each) the “sister arts” of Ba Gua Zhang: Xing Yi and Tai Ji (Tai Chi), including partner

drills. Students also trained in knife defenses, walking meditations, and sitting meditations.

Participants were also exposed to various powerful tools and exercises to develop awareness.

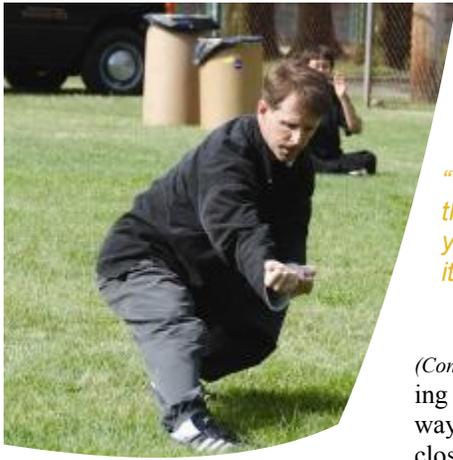
On Saturday night, around a bonfire and under a magnificent star-filled sky, Shifu Ahles answered student questions and shared his deeper personal insights to the practice.

Just wait 'til next year!

**Who Else Is Ready To Do More Than Just Get Fit?**

**To train your body and mind,**

**Call Us!  
201-385-3130**



# A Powerful Tool

*"What Shifu is trying to keep for you is that feeling, that intensity of how important it is to get in touch with your 'Self' and really connect with your being so that it enhances your life."*

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ing to come up with a cool way to salute: sideways or closer to the body or further away from the body or something to make you unique because you're saluting differently. That's not what it's for. Just express appreciation for what you're being taught. Realize that you're part of something that's helping to make you better. This art has been passed

*"...people integrate change more quickly... they're more focused."*

Mr. James O'Leary

down from generation to generation to generation with great care; great emphasis on detail; great emphasis on the love of the art. If you trained centuries ago you would have been a warrior, and if you didn't do it right you would probably die. What Shifu is trying to keep for you is that feeling, that intensity of how important it is to get in touch with your 'Self' and really connect with your being so that it enhances your life."

**"In walking, just walk.**

**In sitting, just sit.**

**Above all, don't wobble."**

Yun-Men

Visit us on the web at: [www.BlueDragonKungFu.com](http://www.BlueDragonKungFu.com)

# Our Philosophy

**We believe that real martial arts were designed to stop the fighting, both within and without.**

**Not for violence, but for peace.**

**Not to beat down, but to build up.**

**Not to compete, but to work together for understanding.**

**Not for tournaments and trophies, but for discipline and respect.**

**To master the mind, by training the body.**



## Blue Dragon School of Martial Arts

53 S. Washington Avenue  
Bergenfield, NJ 07621

“ Since practicing here I've really gained more control of myself. I don't get all worked up like I used to in stressful situations. The practice has definitely changed my life. It has changed the way I see things. I used to get very upset over things that I couldn't control. Now I focus on better things, like people helping each other, and not so much about what is bad in everything I see. It's also the humbleness and integrity of the school that really keeps me coming back, and not really caring about other styles. And I just like the practice. There's a lot less ego than I think a lot of other places have. ”

Chris Harley, Bloomfield, age 25

**Have a friend or family member interested in trying a Free Introductory Lesson? Let us know. Call 201-385-3130**

# events

### Tenaflly Street Fair

Come visit our booth at the Tenaflly Street Fair on Saturday, October 25, 2008. The fair is from 11am-5pm rain or shine. Fun for the whole family.

### Introductory 5-Week Chi Kung Course:

Tuesday evenings 8:30pm, starting October 28, 2008 and running through November 25, 2008. Ideal for anyone, (student, family, friends, co-workers) that has never experienced Chi Kung or for those that would like to brush up on the basics. Chi Kung is one of the most efficient systems for health there is. Through the exercises we develop better balance, flexibility, relaxation, increased circulation, and the ability to focus the mind.

The tuition for the course is \$50.00. Please see Ms. Moschetto to register.

### Ch'iang Shan Pa Kua Chang Seminar and Gua Testing:

Mark your calendars and register early for Shizu's annual visit November 5 - 8, 2008. Two-days of Gua Testing (Wednesday and Thursday evenings, 6:30pm) followed by his two-day Seminar (Friday 5-10pm and Saturday 10am to 4pm). Seminar is open to students and non-students (Call for details). Don't miss this rare opportunity!