



ZenQuest Martial Arts Center

55 Pittsfield Road-Building 10, Lenox, MA 01240

(413) 637-0656 * zenquestmac@sprynet.com * www.zenquestmac.com

An Okinawa Karatedo Association, Demian Maia Jiu-jitsu Network and Siyodtong Boston Affiliate

NEWSLETTER January 2024



The Year of the Dragon

The New Year is upon us and with it comes a chance to reset, refocus, and recommit. For our journey in the martial arts it's a good time to check our schedule and insure that we are setting aside time for training each week. We can also set some new goals for ourselves like working towards our next belt level, learning a new form or skill set, or simply diving farther into the principles of healthier and happier living through the martial arts.

Year of the Dragon - This new year is the 'Year of the Dragon' on the Chinese Zodiac system or 'Shengxiao.' This Shengxiao based on the Chinese lunar calendar which designates an animal for each year in a repeating 12-year cycle. Other animals in the Chinese Zodiac are the Rat, Ox, Tiger, Rabbit, Snake, Horse, Goat, Monkey, Rooster, Dog, and Pig. Each has their own traits and symbolisms.

The Dragon or 'Long' is a revered and iconic symbol affecting different aspects of Chinese life. Dragons are considered protectors that guard sacred places, treasures, and sometimes even individuals. The Chinese dragon is often seen as harmoniously balancing the opposite forces of yin and yang. This embodies the concept of balance and unity in Chinese philosophy. Dragons also are integral to 'Feng Shui', the Chinese practice of harmonizing one's surroundings to enhance well-being.

'Long' imagery is used to attract positive energy, and the placement of dragon symbols is carefully considered in Chinese architecture and design. The Dragon is also a symbol of good fortune, success, and prosperity and the belief in the dragon's positive influence has led to its widespread use in celebrations and festivals.

Dragons of Okinawa - With centuries of trade and influence from different areas of the world, Okinawa has a rich heritage that combines its own unique culture with that from outside of its borders. This is reflected in the traditions and philosophies of the Dragons of Okinawa. Okinawan Dragons or 'Ryu' are generally seen as kind and protective beings which guard the land, sea, and people. Some Okinawan legends depict the Ryu watching over important sites or serving as protectors of specific regions. Ryu are also symbols of power, authority, and good fortune. Emperors and high-ranking officials have historically connected themselves with Dragon imagery to signify their authority and divine connection.

Okinawan folklore includes tales of these mythical creatures as wise beings

(Continued on page 4)



In this Issue

	<i>Page</i>
THE YEAR OF THE DRAGON	1 & 4
TUITION ADJUSTMENTS, KIKAI 2024, WEATHER CLOSURES	2
PROMOTIONS, DATES TO NOTE, NEW STUDENTS, BIRTHDAYS, TERMINOLOGY	3

Tuition Adjustments

To keep pace with increasing expenses, the tuition at ZenQuest has been adjusted slightly. Effective January 1st all basic monthly tuition rates are increased by \$5 per month, with similar discounts for three, six or twelve month commitments and Easy Pay enrollments. Similar discounts for families, college students and Law Enforcement Officers will also stay in place.

These tuition rates will take effect on January 1st, 2024. Students and parents may want to consider taking advantage of the existing rates and committing to longer enrollments prior to the new rates going into effect. This is also a great time to consider enrolling in our 'Easy Pay' subscription payment plan. Doing so before January 1st will lock in your existing tuition rates, and remain unchanged for as long as you stay enrolled with it.

To enroll in Easy Pay, or for any questions related to tuition please contact us or stop at the front desk. As always thanks for your understanding and support!



Kikai 2024

We are excited to tell you about Kikai 2024, an amazing training camp happening in July of 2024! The camp will feature six days of instruction and cultural exchange with three Okinawan Uechi-Ryu/Shohei-Ryu Masters. This will include Master Tatsuhide Miyazato (Kyoshi, 7th Dan), Master Hirokuni Yamashiro (Hanshi, 9th Dan), and Grandmaster Tsutomu Nakahodo (Hanshi, 10th Dan) of the Okinawa Karate-Do Association.

The camp will cover a variety of topics including Sanchin, Kata, Bunkai, Yakusoku Kumite, Kote-Kashi Kitae and more. Kikai 2024 will be co-hosted by two long established Dojos in Massachusetts. The first part of the camp will be held at ZenQuest Martial Arts in Lenox from Sunday, July 21 to Tuesday, July 23. After a day of rest for the Masters, the camp will continue at the Uechi Karate Dojo in North Attleboro from Thursday, July 25 to Saturday, July 27. The event will conclude with an advanced Dan Test and farewell Banquet on Sunday, July 28.

Registration materials for reserving your spot in this incredible opportunity (Kikai) are now available at ZenQuest and via the school's website. Registration for the camp will enable participants to attend as much of the six days of training sessions at both locations as they like. In order to keep the event at a reasonable size, the event is being limited to dojos and members of the Okinawan Karatedo Association and early registration is encouraged.

As always please contact us if you have any questions about the event. We are looking forward to seeing you for a great camp!



WEATHER CLOSURES

Occasionally, the weather will become intense enough during the winter months to present a serious travel risk for our students and instructors. This can result from a single, severe weather event happening at the time of classes; or from an accumulation of events leading up to the time of classes. Other indicators can be other major organizational closings and local travel advisories. If it appears that travel will be too risky during class times, the school will close for that time. Students can verify these closures by checking the school's website or Facebook page, checking their e-mail, and by checking for a message on the ZenQuest phone at 413-637-0656.



IMPORTANT DATES

Week of 1/15-1/20 - Karate Sparring week

Saturday, 1/20 - NAGA Albany

7/21-7/28 - 2024 Kikai Camp

NEW STUDENTS!

Welcome: Justin Eddy, Eliot Gallagher, Phil Peligrad, Leo Earl

Welcome Back: Justin Mairo, Noah Bouthilette

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Justin Mairo 1/2
 Joshua Sondrini 1/2
 Russell Moody 1/6
 Arin Williams 1/6
 Simon Weeks 1/9
 Steven Panzano 1/9
 Joshua Casella 1/11
 Owen Fachini 1/14
 Austyn Ryan 1/15
 Matthew Seward 1/15
 Silas Cunningham 1/16
 TJ Steben 1/17
 Matthew Winter 1/22
 Montanna Inesta 1/23
 Theo Palmer 1/23
 Logan Macy 1/27
 Everett Gallagher 1/27
 Mason Goodrich 1/27
 Nelson Charter 1/31
 Nick Zaricki 1/31
 Miles Stanton 1/31

RECENT PROMOTIONS**TIGERS:**

9kyu - Cole Sawyer, Meredith Bleier, Ethan Stalker, Frankie Miller, Chase Bashara

DRAGONS:

5kyu - Holden Keiper
 9kyu - Kaden Macy, Ben Boscarino, Logan Macy, Ella Piretti

COBRAS:

6kyu - James Mercier
 7kyu - Max Polastri, Sophia Perreault
 8kyu - Victoria Artega-Tucker

UECHI:

9kyu - Matt Winter

PYTHONS:

1 stripe white belt - Ricky Wendt, Myra Bansal

JIU-JITSU:

4 stripe white belt - Elias Casey
 2 stripe white belt - Seth Gabriel, Steve Panzano
 1 stripe white belt - Mahad Ali

Terminology**Good Evening**

Japanese: Kon'bonwa

Brazilian: Boa noite (noich)

Thai: Sawadi Pon Yen

“Best Martial Arts Academy”
ZenQuest Martial Arts



*Berkshire Eagle's
 Readers Choice Awards
SEVEN years
 running!*



(Continued from page 1) **The Year of the Dragon**

which often emphasize the importance of living in harmony with nature and the spiritual world, and imparting valuable life lessons. Okinawan culture also places emphasis on harmony and balance, drawing influences from Chinese and Japanese philosophies related to Dragons. The Okinawan 'Shisa' is a popular mythological creature in Okinawan culture that resembles a lion-dog. These are often placed in pairs to guard against evil spirits. Some interpretations link the Shisa to Chinese guardians that incorporate dragon-like features.

In Uechi-Ryu Karate the Ryu represents an influence of swiftness and unpredictability in technique and strategy. Some of the movements of this classic art are also drawn from Dragon Kung Fu and emphasize generating striking power using the whole body in a serpent-like manner.

Dragons of Thailand - In Thai mythology, the dragon-like creature is known as the 'Naga.' The Naga holds significant importance in Thai culture, and it is associated with various legends, traits, and philosophies. The Naga is often considered the guardian of water sources, such as rivers and lakes. These creatures are believed to reside in bodies of water and have the power to control rainfall and ensure abundant water for consumption and agriculture.

In Buddhism, which plays an important role in Thai culture, Nagas are mentioned in various scriptures. According to Buddhist mythology, the Naga 'Mucalinda' protected the Buddha from a storm by coiling around him and providing shelter with its hood. Thai dragons are also considered protective beings. Temples and important sites in Thailand often feature Naga sculptures or

depictions as a symbol of spiritual protection. Nagas are celebrated in various Thai festivals. One notable event is the Naga Fireballs festival, which takes place along the Mekong River. During this festival, mysterious glowing fireballs are said to rise from the water, believed by locals to be the breath of the Naga.

Muay Thai kickboxing also incorporates an emphasis on striking power and using the whole body to maximize the speed and impact of each technique. Thai culture influences an idea that striking power is derived from both the natural and spirit world.

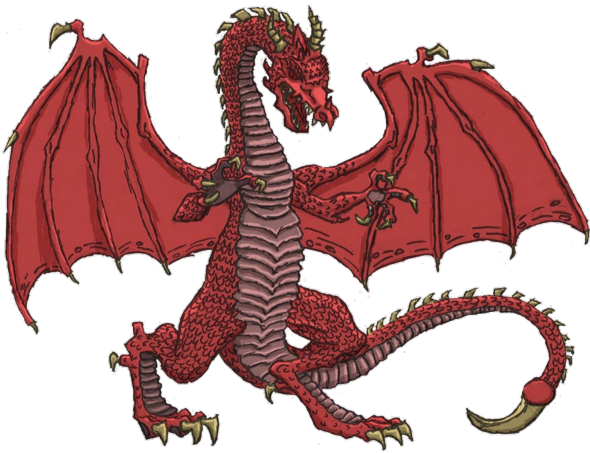
Dragons of Brazil - Brazilian culture does not have a well-defined dragon-like creature comparable to the Eastern dragons. However, Brazilian folklore is rich with various mythical beings and creatures inspired by indigenous beliefs, African traditions, and European influences. Similar

to the themes seen in the Naga of Thai mythology, Brazilian mythical beings often have a strong connection to nature. They are portrayed as guardians of the environment. One is the 'Boitatá', a serpent-like creature that is often associated with fire. According to legend, the Boitatá protects the forests and rivers, and its fiery gaze can punish those who harm the environment.

Drawing from the European influence, Dragons are legendary creatures deeply embedded in the folklore and mythology of European cultures. In many European traditions Dragons or 'Dragao' are scaly, fire breathing, flying creatures who bring evil and chaos. They are often depicted as hostile creatures that terrorize villages and demand sacrifices. European Dragon myths frequently involve heroic journeys where knights or heroes embark on quests to slay Dragons. These stories emphasize bravery, chivalry, and the triumph of good over evil. The challenges posed by Dragons in these myths often test the character and virtues of the heroes and highlight the importance of courage, honor, and selflessness.

The movements and strategies of Brazilian Jiu-jitsu are often compared to an anaconda as they are very serpentine and constricting. These are generally accepted traits of the Dragon, too.

So, happy New Year and may 2024 bring you health, happiness, and great year for your martial arts journey in the spirit of the DRAGON!






Offering the BEST in:
Uechi-Ryu Karate • Brazilian Jiu-jitsu
Thai Kickboxing • Mixed Martial Arts

We'd like to thank all of our students, instructors, parent organizations, families, and supporters for helping to make ZenQuest amazing. Huge thanks for voting us **Best of The Berkshires for SEVEN years in a row!**




55 Pittsfield-Lenox Rd., Lenox, MA 01240
(413) 637-0656