

New Orleans Men's Center
NOMC
Spring Retreat 2014
Theme: The Buddha, the Vampire and the Dragon
Your facilitators, Benny Russell and Richard

We will explore the Buddha, the Vampire and the Dragon as told in stories in lore.

What unites these apparently opposed archetypes, and how do they reveal our human condition?

Please read beyond the retreat particulars to see some articles which we have provided as "Food for Thought" related to our retreat theme...



**THE NOMC SPRING RETREAT WILL BE
April 11-13, 2014 AT KING'S ARROW RANCH, HILLSDALE, MS**

WHAT TO EXPECT

We seek to provide a safe place for men to connect with themselves, other men and the environment. Large and small group experiences as well as some time alone are planned. In our mythopoetic tradition, storytelling, poetry, drumming and experiential learning can be expected.

PLEASE INVITE ANOTHER MAN TO COME WITH YOU.

WHEN

Arrive Friday, April 11th. On-site registration and bunk assignment will begin at 5 p.m. Please plan to arrive no later than 6 P.M. Dinner will be available at 6 P.M., and our opening ceremony will begin at 7 PM. You may arrive as early as you wish on Friday to check out the grounds, hike, meditate, etc. The retreat will end after lunch on Sunday.

WHERE

King's Arrow Ranch, Hillsdale, MS, just east of I-59 North at exit 35, 75 miles north of New Orleans and 30 miles south of Hattiesburg, MS. In case of emergency, you can be reached through the King's Arrow Range phone # 601-796-3423. You will be asked not to use or access your cell phone during the Retreat.

PRE-REGISTER VIA E-MAIL

We ask that you pre-register by April 1st so we can estimate lodging and meals required. To register, just reply to this email (retreat@thenomc.org) and let us know you will be there. If you do not have email, call one of the facilitators to register. A confirmation letter with more details will be sent upon registration. For confidentiality and privacy, information provided for registration will only be available to retreat participants.

COST

The cost of the Retreat is \$120.00 and that fee covers all meals and lodging. You can pay by check or cash upon arrival, Friday April 11th.

SCHOLARSHIPS

If you need financial assistance, please contact a facilitator.

QUESTIONS?

For additional information about the retreat, contact a facilitator.

Richard 504-905-1725 RVallon@me.com

VISIT THE NOMC WEBSITE

<http://www.thenomc.org/retreats.html>



If you would like to be removed from the NOMC mailing list, please reply to this email and type "remove" in the email text.

A Buddhist Story...

A Pile of Dry Shit

One day a famous government officer met a highly respected elderly master. Being conceited, he wanted to prove that he was the superior person.

As their conversation drew on, he asked the master, "Old monk, do you know what I think of you and the things you said?"

The master replied, "I don't care what you think of me. You are entitled to have your own opinion."

The officer snorted, "Well, I will tell you what I think anyway. In my eyes, you are just like a pile of dry shit!"

The master simply smiled and stayed quiet.

Seeing that his insult had fallen into deaf ears, he asked curiously, "And what do you think of me?"

The master said, "In my eyes, you are just like the Buddha."

Hearing this remark, the officer left happily and bragged to his wife about the incident.

His wife said to him, "You conceited fool! When a person has a heart like a pile of dry shit, he sees everyone in that light. The elderly master has a heart like that of the Buddha, and that is why in his eyes, everyone, including you, is like the Buddha!"

About the DRAGON-

Some considerations by Benny...

What part of a dragon do you respond to? The dragon who flies above, spouting fire and casting fear and fright to all who see you. Are you covered with scales, hiding yourself so others only see that hard protective cover. Or...are you like an Eastern dragon which brings rain to the village. Is your blood poisonous and full of evil. What parts of the dragon do you like, and why do you like these parts? Do you wish to slay your "dragons" and what do these slain parts represent?

The Dragon continued....

Below is a St. George dragon story Russell provided for us...

In a later version of the legend^l St. George travelled for many months by land and sea until he came to Libya. Here he met a poor hermit who told him that everyone in that land was in great distress, for a dragon had long ravaged the country.

'Every day,' said the old man, 'he demands the sacrifice of a beautiful maiden and now all the young girls have been killed. The king's daughter alone remains, and unless we can find a knight who can slay the dragon she will be sacrificed tomorrow. The king of Egypt will give his daughter in marriage to the champion who overcomes this terrible monster.'

When St. George heard this story, he was determined to try and save the princess, so he rested that night in the hermit's hut, and at daybreak set out to the valley where the dragon lived. When he drew near he saw a little procession of women, headed by a beautiful girl dressed in pure Arabian silk. The princess Sabra was being led by her attendants to the place of death. The knight spurred his horse and overtook the ladies. He comforted them with brave words and persuaded the princess to return to the palace. Then he entered the valley.

As soon as the dragon saw him it rushed from its cave, roaring with a sound

louder than thunder. Its head was immense and its tail fifty feet long. But St. George was not afraid. He struck the monster with his spear, hoping he would wound it.

The dragon's scales were so hard that the spear broke into a thousand pieces. and St. George fell from his horse. Fortunately he rolled under an enchanted orange tree against which poison could not prevail, so that the venomous dragon was unable to hurt him. Within a few minutes he had recovered his strength and was able to fight again.

He smote the beast with his sword, but the dragon poured poison on him and his armour split in two. Once more he refreshed himself from the orange tree and then, with his sword in his hand, he rushed at the dragon and pierced it under the wing where there were no scales, so that it fell dead at his feet.

A picture of Chinese men riding dragons.



Dragons Continued...

"HAVE You seen the dragon?" asks Mr. Okakura in The Awakening of Japan. "Approach him cautiously, for no mortal can survive the sight of his entire body. The eastern dragon is not the gruesome monster of mediaeval imagination, but the genius of strength and goodness. He is the spirit of change, therefore of life itself. . . . Hidden in the caverns of inaccessible mountains, or coiled in the unfathomed depths of the sea, he awaits the time when he slowly arouses himself into activity. He unfolds himself in the storm-clouds; he washes his mane in the blackness of the seething whirlpools. His claws are in the fork of the lightning, his scales begin to glisten in the bark of rain-swept pine-trees. His voice is heard in the hurricane, which, scattering the withered leaves of the forest, quickens a new spring. The dragon reveals himself only to vanish."

Russell submitted this snippet from Bram Stoker's Dracula...

What I saw was the Count's head coming out from the window. I did not see the face, but I knew the man by the neck and the movement of his back and arms. In any case I could not mistake the hands which I had had some many opportunities of studying. I was at first interested and somewhat amused, for it is wonderful how small a matter will interest and amuse a man when he is a prisoner. But my very feelings changed to repulsion and terror when I saw the whole man slowly emerge from the window and begin to crawl down the castle wall over the dreadful abyss, face down with his cloak spreading out around him like great wings. At first I could not believe my eyes. I thought it was some trick of the moonlight, some weird effect of shadow, but I kept looking, and it could be no delusion. I saw the fingers and toes grasp the corners of the stones, worn clear of the mortar by the stress of years, and by thus using every projection and inequality move downwards with considerable speed, just as a lizard moves along a wall.

What manner of man is this, or what manner of creature, is it in the semblance of man? I feel the dread of this horrible place overpowering me. I am in fear, in awful fear, and there is no escape for me. I am encompassed about with terrors that I dare not think of.

And finally an ancient Chinese Vampire/Zombie related story....
Found by Richard...

Jiangshi, sometimes called "Chinese vampires" by Westerners, are corpses that are usually reanimated due to magical reasons. In ancient China, people always had the preference of being buried in their hometowns, and when a person dies in a land that is not their hometown, their family members hire a sorcerer to bring back their deceased family member. The family commissions the sorcerer in their village to travel to the place of the person's death, locate the corpse, and to write a spell and stick it upon the corpses's face, in which the spell-paper contains their name, birthdate, and some other words to reanimate the corpse. Once the paper is stuck upon the corpses's face, the newly created jiangshi would follow the sorcerer by hopping around, in which the sorcerer would lead it back to its hometown for burial (this was often a last-resort choice used by families with not enough money to hire a cart to carry the corpse back). Usually, the sorcerer would travel by night, and would at least have around three jiangshi traveling with it. But when the written spell-paper falls or is pulled off of the jiangshi (in the case the sorcerer is not paid the agreed amount for his doings, he might rip off the jiangshi's spell-paper), it gains its own consciousness, and all the power that the sorcerer formerly had over it would be lost. Instead of being an obedient corpse that followed the sorcerer, the jiangshi would be rampant and dangerous. The freed jiangshi would begin killing living creatures to absorb life essence (qì) from their victims. They are said to be created when a person's soul (魄 pò) fails to leave the deceased's body.