

Wah Lum Kung Fu Tampa Galvanizes Chinese New Year and the Community

Bob Ong February 04, 2014



Wah Lum Kung Fu of Tampa

2014 is actually 4712 in the Chinese Lunar New Year, Year of the Horse. It is clearly the most important day on the calendar for Chinese people throughout the world, but not only for Chinese, but also for those that celebrate and honor the Chinese culture

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Nowhere is this more apparent than in Tampa, Florida where the Wah Lum Kung Fu School of Tampa resides and houses the most prominent Chinese martial arts establishment and authentic environment for Chinese culture. The Wah Lum Kung Fu of Tampa is one of the descendants of Grandmaster Pui Chan who was born in China, established his roots in Boston as a top Chinese kung fu master in the U.S., and migrated to Orlando, Florida in 1980 as a pioneer well South of the Border.

Wah Lum Kung Fu of Tampa was created by Sifu (Master) Thomas Haase, who served in the United States military and travelled the world stationed in the Air Force in Alaska, Korea, and other destinations where he was passionate about studying the real and authentic Chinese martial arts from the best. If you did not know, you would think that his school was the home of a Chinese master. The façade and external surroundings of the school located on the corner of Rome and Cass in Tampa's toney Hyde Park area immediately give the impression of being somewhere special and very untraditionally American. This school is anything but untraditional since its roots date back to the Shaolin Chinese Temple and embody the techniques and form sets that were established throughout centuries of Chinese Wu Shu and kung fu.

There is an alter that burns incents and provide the means to honor and respect the ancestors in the Wah Lum's family tree. Sifu Haase never ignores the traditions of respect and protocol with his students and anyone that is fortunate enough to be in his presence. As one gazes around the school or "kwoon" as it is referred to in the Chinese nomenclature, one cannot ignore the traditional weaponry of swords, staffs, cudgels, tridents, and Chinese lion heads that decorate the entire room. Red and black are the colors of a traditional Chinese kung fu establishment, and the Wah Lum School is no different.

This past weekend, Wah Lum played host to the Tampa Bay community, opening its doors to the public to share its ceremonial and traditional lion dances, fireworks, and kung fu demonstrations. With such a display of talent and cultural affinity, Wah Lum has positioned itself at the epicenter of the most important day in the Chinese culture, the Chinese New Year. Tampa has never been known as a cultural destination for the Chinese community, but that is changing fast. The Wah Lum Kung Fu of Tampa teaches traditional kung fu forms and weapons, Tai Chi, lion dancing, and even massage. Haase and his wife, Cynthia, have been embraced by the Chinese community where they are invited to perform the traditional dances and performances that were only reserved for the "Chinese only" kung fu schools. They have been respected as understanding and displaying the performances the way they are supposed to be done with all the pomp and circumstance that only true aficionados of the Chinese martial arts could appreciate. For more in depth information about the Wah Lum Kung Fu of Tampa, contact them at: Wah Lum Kung Fu of Tampa www.wahlum.org 1702 W. Cass St. Tampa, FL 33606 (813) 253-0160.

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