

Visit to Yip Man Tong

By Edmond Chow



Front Door to Yip Man Tong

On December of 2003, I went on a vacation trip with my mother to my home city of Guangzhou, China. As this is very close to Foshan, late grandmaster Yip Man's home city, we decided to take this opportunity to fulfill a 詠春 Wing Tsun pilgrimage.

It was a warm, sunny day, typical winter weather in Southeast Asia, on the 24th of December 2003. We woke up early that day for the drive down to the small city of Foshan, home to great kung fu legends including Wing Tsun's Yip Man and Hung Gar's Wong Fei Hong. Foshan is an industrial city, about 15km from Guangzhou, and has a population of about 370,000. The drive consisted of driving down the highways that connect the cities in the Guangzhou area. Being accustomed to the clean air of Vancouver, it was hard to keep our eyes open as the smog's sting brought tears to our eyes. After an hour, we were greeted by the usual crowded streets again. We finally arrived at Foshan at about noon.

Before heading out to Yip Man Tong, we decided to have a quick lunch first. In China, McDonalds and KFC were considered to be somewhat fine-dining as quality Chinese food is very inexpensive (a mere \$10CAD can possibly feed a table of 5). After sitting down for a Guangzhou lunch of noodles in soup, we found our way to the grand Ancestral Temple of Foshan.



Gate to Ancestral Temple of Foshan

The Ancestral Temple of Foshan contains shrines of Chinese gods, a Chinese Opera stage, food and souvenir shops, as well as memorial halls for both Yip Man and Wong Fei Hong. From the picture above, Yip Man Tong is just to the left after one enters the front gate of the temple.



Complete View of Yip Man Tong



Welcoming Sign in front of Yip Man Tong

To the left of Yip Man Tong, we find a room called “The glories room of Ip Man Tong”. This room displays the many banners and flags that were presented by students of Wing Tsun from around the world and opening day souvenirs that were given out to those who attended the opening ceremony on November of 2002.



The Entrance to “The glories room of Ip Man Tong”

The main building of Yip Man Tong is divided into several sections: Disciples Section, Main Hall, and the Kung Fu Corridor.

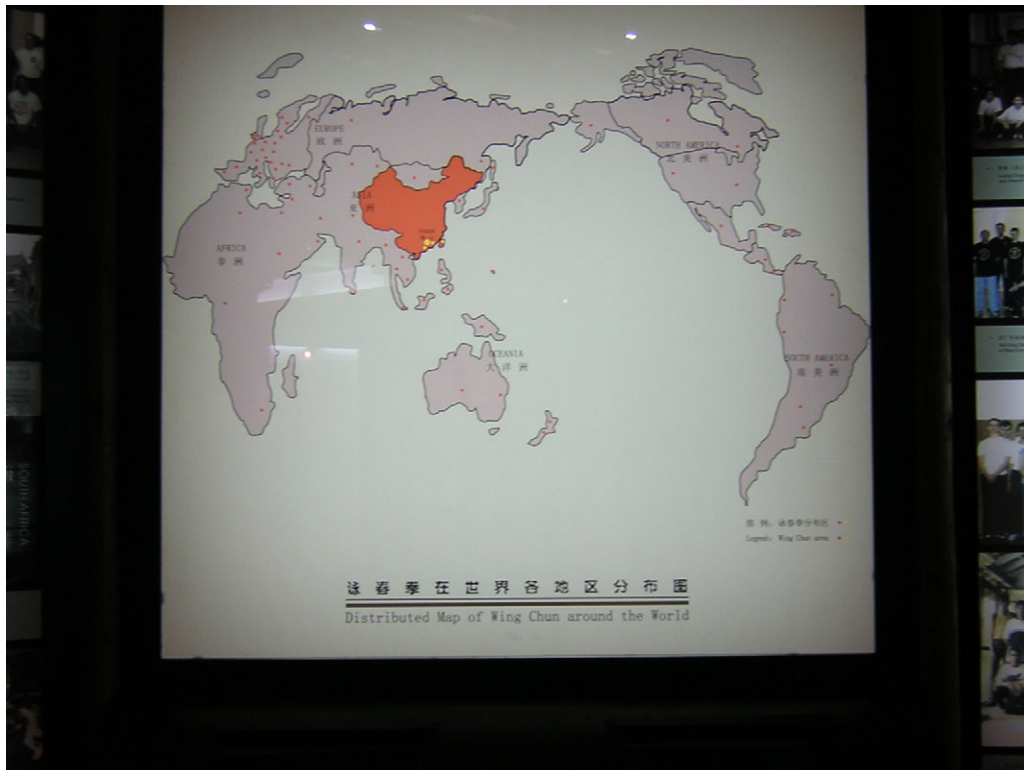


Entrance to Main Building of Yip Man Tong

The Disciples Section is a display of how big the 詠春 Wing Tsun family is, showcasing the many branches and instructors around the world. The leading instructors of each country and branch are presented here with pictures, their biographies, and their contributions to 詠春 Wing Tsun (e.g. books).



Entrance to Disciples Section



Locations of Yip Man Branch 詠春 (Wing Tsun, Wing Chun, Ving Tsun) Schools



Grandmaster Leung Ting's Display

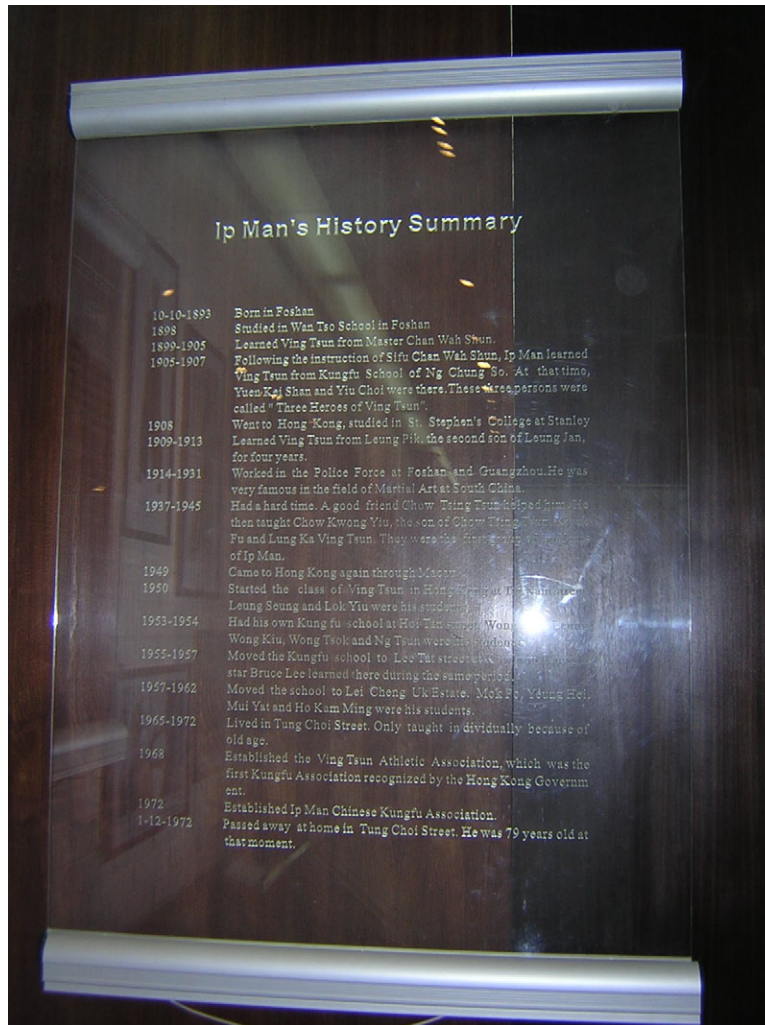


The Hollywood Star of Bruce Lee, one of Yip Man's most famous students

The Main Hall section of Yip Man Tong is the room dedicated to preserving Grandmaster Yip Man's legacy. It comprises of displays of black and white pictures that span the life of Grandmaster Yip Man; relics such as his study desk, his walking stick, and his collection of books on martial arts and Chinese medicine; as well as a giant bronze statue of Grandmaster Yip Man himself with his biography engraved in marble slabs. It is truly an honourable display reflecting the grandmaster's simple elegance as a Confucian scholar.



Grandmaster Yip Man's Bronze Statue



Timeline of Grandmaster Yip Man's life



Pictures Displayed in the Main Hall



Grandmaster Yip Man's Study



One of the Three Books written by Leung Jan in Grandmaster Yip Man's Library



Grandmaster Yip Man's ID and Passport

The Kung Fu Corridor consists of a display of 詠春 Wing Tsun's weapons and training tools including the Bart Jam Dao (Eight Slash Knives), Luk Deem Buen Gwun (Six Points and a Half Pole), and Muk Yun Jong (Wooden Dummy). It also displays various action photos of practitioners performing 詠春 Wing Tsun techniques and a wall of photos containing all the techniques in the Muk Yun Jong form (no photos were allowed to be taken here). This room illustrates 詠春 Wing Tsun in action to the visitors who may not have a background in martial arts or may not have seen 詠春 Wing Tsun previously. The weapons, training tools, and photos present 詠春 Wing Tsun in its dynamic and efficient form.



Sign at the Entrance of the Kung Fu Corridor



詠春 *Wing Tsun's Bart Jam Dao and Muk Yun Jong*



Action Photo of Grandmaster Yip Man's Eldest Son, Yip Chun



Collection of Photos of 詠春 Wing Tsun in Action



Action Photo of Bruce Lee



Wall of Signatures of Grandmaster Yip Man's followers who attended the Opening Ceremony

This concludes the visit to Yip Man Tong, the memorial hall of grandmaster Yip Man located in the Ancestral Temple of Foshan. To unfamiliar guests, the memorial hall may be just one of the many displays that one can view in the Ancestral Temple of Foshan; but to 詠春 Wing Tsun students, it is a treasure trove of 詠春 Wing Tsun history and an opportunity to learn more about and relate to our grandmaster Yip Man. The pictures presented here are very limited in conveying the rewarding experience of visiting Yip Man Tong. Even a two-hour stay and carefully taking pictures of all the displays do not serve it justice. I highly recommend that fellow students of 詠春 (Wing Tsun, Wing Chun, Ving Tsun) should spend some time there whenever they are in the area of Foshan, China.