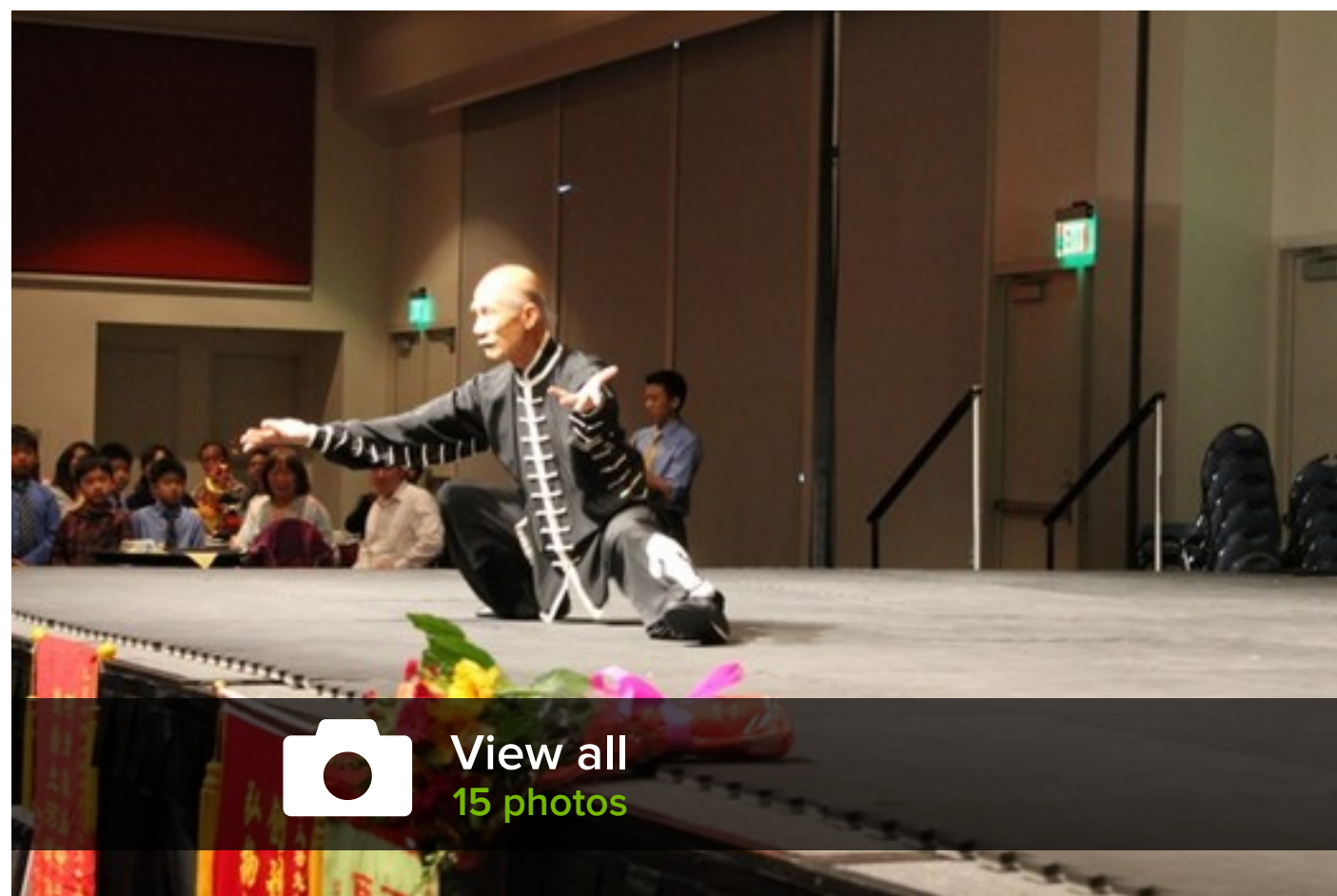


Wushu is rejected once again by Olympics

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The [International Olympics Committee \(IOC\)](#) recently announced that wrestling would re-enter the Olympic stage. We will not see [Wushu](#) in 2016 Games, nor will we see it in 2020 Games, or 2024 Games.



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Grandmaster Chan Pui performed during Kung Fu Tai Chi Magazine 20th Anniversary Gala, San Jose, California, Julne 2012.

Violet Li



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Actually the rejection of Wushu was made in May by an IOC Executive Board meeting held in St. Petersburg, Russia. It was decided then that only wrestling, softball-baseball, and squash were qualified for the final vote.

Wushu is a phonetic Chinese term. Wu means martial, and Shu means arts. Wushu means Chinese martial arts. **Shaolin, Wing Chun, Eagle's Claw, Hong Ga, Wudang, Baguazhang**, and **Tai Chi** (Taiji) are branches of Wushu. But in recent decades, Wushu has taken on a new meaning. For competition purpose, sets of highly defined and regulated regimen modified from the traditional martial arts were adopted. China and martial arts enthusiasts around the world have tried extremely hard to push Wushu into Olympics. There were a few occasions that activists felt hopeful but the goal was never obtained.

With support from the Chinese government, International Wushu Federation (IWUF) was founded and located in Beijing, China in 1990. Their goal is to promote Wushu worldwide, and to become part of the Olympic games. IWUF grew quickly, and was accepted as an official member of the General Association of International Sports Federations (GAISF) in 1994; with that, IWUF was recognized by IOC. In 1997, with a membership of 77 countries, IWUF became a member of IOC. IWUF made multiple attempts to enter the Olympic games without success.

China hosted the 2008 Olympic games in Beijing. IWUF got special permission to host an international competition in an Olympic stadium during the Beijing Olympic Games. Even though it was a great honor to compete in an Olympic stadium, Wushu athletes were frustrated that their accomplishments were not awarded with Olympic medals.

Since 2005, the IOC has evaluated competition items, and tried to eliminate sports without global popularity, and to add new items to enrich the Games. Wushu and other sports have been battling in this over-crowded arena, and only few have succeeded. Countless Chinese Martial Arts masters, including late prominent Professor [Jiang Hao-Quan](#), have been devoted themselves to this cause.

Currently, 147 countries and regions belong to IWUF. The number of both traditional Chinese martial art practitioners and Wushu artists is easily over 80 millions. IWUF should be credited for its effort promoting the arts. Nevertheless, IWUF is not the only hero that elevated the awareness of Chinese martial arts.

In China, sports are like other sectors; it is a top-down approach. The central government's policy dictates how the budget is allocated. Local sports officials are worried that Wushu will be treated disadvantageously versus Olympic sports. But martial art experts hold a different view. They claimed that for judging purposes, many intricate and profound skills were stripped from Wushu. Modern Wushu has been modeled after gymnastics, and lost its traditional values in martial art applications, health, and beauty. They felt that the traditional martial arts were sacrificed for the sake of getting into Olympic Games.

Grandmaster [Bai Wen-xiang](#) is a well-respected martial artist. Born in 1947, he was trained first in traditional martial arts and was well versed in many external and internal martial art styles. As a teenager, he learned Wushu in Shangxi Wushu Troop. After the [Chinese Cultural Revolution](#) (1966-76), he became a coach, and trained many Wushu champions including the most awarded [Zhao Changjun](#). Kung Fu movie super star [Donnie Yen](#) (who played Ip Man) and Chen Style Tai Chi (Taiji) Sifu [Stephan Berwick](#) studied with him before.

Bai had a unique view on the subject. During my interview with him last year, he stated that even though the Chinese government worked very hard to promote Wushu, the results were not impressive nor had it changed martial arts. On the contrary, Tai Chi, [Qigong](#) and other traditional martial arts have grown substantially in the past 20 years without the support from the central government. The fact speaks loudly that the traditional martial arts have their own value, which is highly appreciated not only by Chinese but also people around the world. Therefore, "we had witnessed a grassroots effort by martial art enthusiasts regardless of race, nationality, political system, or religion, to promote the arts internationally," said Bai. [World Tai Chi & Qigong Day](#) is a perfect example. Without any government support, Bill Douglas and Angela Wang of Kansas City have promoted Tai Chi and Qigong to [Oceania](#), [Asia](#), [Africa](#), [Europe](#), [North America](#), and [South America](#) with supporters. Each year millions of people in over eighty countries celebrate Tai Chi and Qigong on the last Saturday of April.

To Grandmaster Bai, Wushu entering Olympics is not relevant. With the help from the multiplicity of media and practitioners' enthusiasm, he is optimistic that traditional Chinese martial arts will continue grow.

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