

Chinese Physical Culture Association 精武體育會

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Mission: To preserve and promote kung fu, lion dancing, and related traditional arts; to strengthen members' moral and physical stamina through the practice of these arts; and to teach respect, courage, and confidence.

The original Jeng Moo Clubhouse on Kapena Lane, for many years the focal point for Chinese cultural activities in Honolulu



History: Jeng Moo (精武 *jingwu* “to be adept in the martial arts”) Association was established in Shanghai in 1909 by Chen Kung-che and a group of friends, in response to the turbulence in China. By perpetuating martial arts and Chinese culture overall, members hoped to instill renewed self-confidence among the Chinese. They focused on cultivating virtue (德 *de*), wisdom (智 *zhi*), and courage (勇 *yong*). Later, “courage” was replaced with “physical culture” or “physical education”: 體 *ti*. The Jeng Moo Tai Yuk Oi (精武體育會 *Jingwu Tiyuhui*) subsequently became the foremost martial arts association in Asia. The group was singularly non-political in nature, and attracted scores of well-known kungfu masters following various styles as its instructors. It is responsible for the preservation and popularization of many traditional forms of martial arts, and for focusing attention on traditional performing folk arts and the importance of physical culture and education.

In Hawai‘i, a club called the Shang-wu Kwan was established in 1923 by well-known musicians and Cantonese opera stars, with the intent of transmitting Chinese cultural arts. In 1933, the club changed its name to the Jeng Moo Tai Yuk Oui (精武體育會 *Jingwu Tiyu Hui*), and membership was restricted to adult males with prior training in Chinese martial arts. Hua Kuang (the Cantonese patron of actors, musicians, and acrobates) was adopted as the club’s patron deity.

In 1934, a Chinese laundry at 12 Kapena Lane was renovated and made into club headquarters. As the first and only chartered kungfu and lion dance club in Hawaii, the Association thrived. During WWII, martial law in the Islands restricted many of the club's activities, and energy was redirected towards the war effort. . With young men being called away to armed service, club membership was expanded to include Chinese youths related to existing members, and young servicemen of Chinese ancestry. The club became an unofficial auxiliary USO. Eventually, more changes in club policy allowed women and non-Chinese into the association as well.

Downtown Honolulu's Urban Renewal Program forced the closure of club facilities in the 1960s, and a move to temporary quarters which served until 1971. The Association is now housed in the social hall of the Tan Wah Gee Temple at 1614 Nuuanu Avenue. Members hope to build permanent quarters eventually. The Association has been successful in perpetuating traditional kungfu and lion dance forms. Its unique K'ai-Kuang ceremonies reflect traditional religious rites, and is perhaps found nowhere else in the United States.

Lion dances in the streets of Honolulu to celebrate the end of World War II



Activities Membership participation in Society activities is high. The year begins with an election and social meeting. Next, the Spring Banquet attracts both members and guests, and features an award ceremony honoring the "Member of the Year," who receives a trophy. A perpetual plaque, donated by Robert H.K.Chang, lists the names of all honorees. During the Night in Chinatown celebration for Chinese New Year, members run a food booth to help boost the club's treasury. Most of all, though, the association's lion-dancing teams are in high demand throughout the year, particularly around the time of the major Chinese festivals.



Participating in the annual Narcissus Festival and Parade in 1950

Membership: There are over 100 members currently. Membership is available to anyone, regardless of race, age, religion, gender and ethnic culture



The Jeng Moo lion solves a puzzle: a tradition all but lost in China but still preserved in Honolulu

Association presidents

1923-73 Lee Mun Yun,
Inn Pung Fung,
Charles Hoo,
David Lee Pang,
Dai Leong,
Wilfred H. S. Young,
Edwin Young,
Bing Fai Lau,
Tim Chan Lee,
Young Yee,

Koon Lum Chun,
Herbert S. C. Lum,
Norman Tang,
Lawrence C. W. Ing,
Robert S. H. Chow,
Mun Cho Yim,
Moo Yew Chong,
Tin Chong Goo,
Lawrence K. C. Chung,
Andrew K. L. Ho,
Walter Tang,

Allan O. L. Choy
1974-76 Russell Tang
1977-79 Foster Lau
1980 Larry Tang
1981-83 Arthur K. K. Wong
1984-87 Gilbert K. H. Wong
1988-90 Lum Nip Leong
1991-98 Albert Chun, Jr.
1999 Sherman G. B. Wong
2000-02 Wilfred Hee
2003 Nathan Nakanishi



Lions help to ring in a prosperous New Year

Sources: CPCA 50th Anniversary publication (August 6, 1983), and correspondence with the Association