

Aurora martial arts centre earns Shaolin moniker



By Jake Courtepatte

When it comes to the martial arts, the Shaolin Temple of China is synonymous with expertise, discipline, and a rich history. Now, Canada's Black Belt Martial Arts in Aurora has the opportunity to share in that history, officially changing its name to Shaolin Martial Arts Canada after an acceptance as an official affiliate of the Shaolin Temple.

"The Shaolin Temple is the original source of all martial arts in existence today," said Black Belt Master Tim Wakefield. "Every martial art owes in some way or another to the great innovations of the Shaolin culture."

With the official moniker of "Overseas Shaolin Culture Institution", the centre is now able to teach the Shaolin style.

According to Master Wakefield, Shaolin is based off "moving meditations" that can be translated into any form of martial arts.

"It's truly an honour to have 'Shaolin' in our new name."

Celebrating the change at a demonstration open house and barbecue last Saturday, the weekend also marked the 23rd anniversary since Master Wakefield opened the school in Aurora.

"The school has made a large impact on the community in all the year's it's been in town," said Aurora Mayor Geoff Dawe. "This rebranding only works to solidify its place in the community."

Master Shi Juan Yiang, a real Shaolin monk from the Temple, also paid a visit to Aurora for the first time since 2015 to perform a ceremony to honour the Temple's newest inductee.

Along with the acceptance, Master Wakefield himself was named as a direct disciple of the Head Abbot of the Temple, a 34th generation Warrior Monk, the first Canadian to do so under the current Abbot.

Master Wakefield began his training over thirty years ago, studying the Shaolin Kemp Karate system under Master Henry Choo Chong in Richmond Hill. He has been teaching his practice in Aurora and the GTA since 1994, receiving his Eighth Degree Black Belt in Kenpo Karate in 2013.