



# Lui Leung Wai

## PROFILE

Movie Star. Handsome. Charming. Rich. Talented. Words befitting a SuperStar. And, Ray Lui is that and more. With a film career spanning 20 years, he has appeared in leading roles in over 100 movies and tallied up literally thousands of hours on numerous television series' making his mark in the China/Hong Kong entertainment industry as a contender for icon status. Lui is now ready to take on America.

"I'm an actor. Some say Super Star. I say, 'no—actor.' I love to act. I love what I do," stated Lui. "People have only one life and they live that life as themselves. But as an actor, I have the opportunity to act in many roles and live many lives. I can play a part as a police detective or a gangster—study their lives and play out my role as if I were them. I am fortunate to know what it is like to be many people."

I recently caught up with Lui at The Four Seasons Hotel, in Beverly Hills. He was visiting Los Angeles with his wife of five years, Yang Xiao Juan and their adorable four-year old son Ryan. Throughout our interview Ryan popped in and out, dazzling us with his mastery of jumps, spins, twirls and array of toys—not to mention his language skills. Ryan speaks four fluently—as does Lui. No doubt Ryan's own star is just beginning to shine.



Born in Vietnam, Lui is one of five children and was 10-years old when his family moved to Hong Kong. This is Lui's fifth visit to the United States in two years and he tells me that his *of-to-far-in-the-future* plans include a move to Los Angeles with his family, where he plans to add Hollywood to his resume. Also on his agenda, Lui is

looking forward to learning about American culture and customs.

Early on, Lui studied acting at the Academy of Hong Kong and has played about every character one can imagine since he started his film career. He says he accepts roles based on details of that particular character—the more complicated—the better—whether the role is a good or bad guy. And, when it comes to preparing for a film, there is nothing he won't do to get in character. He is known for doing his own stunts and reflects on a past role as a gangster where he visited the prison where the real criminal was incarcerated to speak with him and get a feel for the character he was to play.

"In the beginning when I got to the prison, he was angry that I was planning to play him in a movie," states Lui. "The fact was...we wanted to use his real name in the movie and without his permission, it would not have been possible. By the time I left, he had agreed and the movie was a tremendous success."

Lui has earned an international reputation for hard work and dedication to his craft. His tremendous talent speaks for itself and throughout China he is elevated to SuperStar status, enjoying a privileged and celebrated career, alongside the likes of acting heavyweights Jackie Chan and Chow Yun Fat, both of whom Lui has worked with. Also, on his co-star list is the actress Li Gong, star of the current hit, *Memoirs of a Geisha*. Lui is so revered throughout Asia that he is one of four celebrities honored with his face appearing in many of his most famous roles on government stamps, sold worldwide.

"I loved the movies. As a child I watched movies every day. Robert De Niro, Clint Eastwood, Tom Hanks,

Sean Penn, Johnny Depp—they were my favorites and I always hoped one day to meet and work with them."

This visit to Los Angeles is more work than pleasure. He is scouting a director for his upcoming movie project *Red Poppies*. Based on the remarkable Tibetan book of the same name, it's an international

masterpiece of epic proportions for worldwide release, with accomplishments and awards that already include notably the coveted golden prize of Chinese literature, the *Mao Dun Award*.

This anticipated project is set in the 1930s and takes place in eastern China. The project promises to push Lui's career further into the stratosphere, with its sweeping range of historic significance. The ambitious and intriguing screenplay opens a window on the story of the Maichi family, a powerful dynasty and the influence it lent to a nation. The story takes place in Tibet, and beautifully depicts panoramic settings, with high drama characters, dispelling beliefs concerning this otherwise noted pacifistic society.

Seeing *Red Poppies* make it to the big screen is Lui's priority and his time here in LA has been invaluable. Major players in the movie industry including Warner Brothers, have expressed interest in this project and Lui is more than pleased at the reception he has received. The script, he says will be ready within weeks and he is looking to conquer yet another level in an industry he admires and loves so much. Over

the years Lui has portrayed numerous Chinese legends and in 2005 took on one of his biggest challenges: the lead

role as Master Painter Cheung Tai Chin, once again proving to audiences, critics and peers his versatility and talent as a screen icon.

It's hard to imagine this man a movie star. Lui is low key, down to earth and although people

were asking for autographs, he seems to have evolved to a place where his interest lies in helping others (as much as himself) achieve their dreams. Lui works tirelessly for charitable causes in China. He is a Mentor for Chaing Kong Province Deaf Children Re-habilitation Center, and amazingly has over the past three years financed the building of 11 schools in desolate country areas for underprivileged children. These children otherwise would have no education due to financial circumstances of their families or locations of their homes—some more than three hours away from local schools, with no transportation available.

"Being an actor is not easy. Many times we are on the set for 20 hours a day and the work is tiring. But acting is my dream. And coming to live and work in America will be yet another welcome challenge for me."

When I ask how he will feel here in America when many may not recognize him as they do in China he replies, "No problem. It's OK. I will work hard and I will learn. Life always changes and it's up to us to pick the right time to make those changes."

For further information  
WOW partners, LLC.  
Diane Wachs  
(818) 645-8302  
Email: dani@wowpartners.com

