

## Lum Sai Ho Tong Honors Bi Gan, the Great Ancestor of the Lum Family

June 4, 2022



Bi Gan (aka Pi Kan) was a member of the ruling family of the Shang Dynasty and served as minister to his nephew King Zhou. King Zhou was a cruel tyrant, notorious for seeking pleasure from beautiful women, drinking, and feasting to excess. His disregard for state affairs led to endless suffering of his subjects. As a political advisor, Bi Gan admonished the King telling him he needed to change his ways for the good of the people. This drew the anger of King Zhou who asked him what gave him the strength to lecture him in such manner. Bi Gan answered that being virtuous gave him that strength. King Zhou said he heard that a sage's heart had seven valves and ordered that Bi Gan's heart be cut out so the court could examine it to prove his virtuousness. News spread quickly of Bi Gan's death and his wife who was heavily pregnant fled into the wilderness. There in the forest next to a spring she gave birth to a son. She named him Lin Chien, Lin meaning "forest" and Chien meaning "spring of water". After the fall of King Zhou, rulers of the following dynasty found Bi Gan's wife and child in the forest and bestowed upon them the surname Lin. The family name Lin is also spelled as Lum, Lam, Lim, and Lem.

On June 4, Lum Sai Ho Tong celebrated Bi Gan's birthday and honored him as the father of the first Lum. In Chinese history, Minister Bi Gan was honored by Confucius as one of the Three Men of Virtue of the Shang. Confucius taught that in order to meet Heaven's approval, a ruler's action must benefit his subjects. This was called *The Mandate of Heaven* and has been the cornerstone of Chinese government for thousands of years.

