

Historic Building Appraisal
Po Kok Monastery
No. 60 Hammer Hill Road, Ngau Chi Wan, Kowloon

Po Kok Monastery (寶覺精舍) in Hammer Hill Road (斧山道) is one of the oldest monasteries in Ngau Chi Wan (牛池灣). It was built in **1935** by a Taoist priest Hung Hok-yung (孔學庸) who came from China. Together with another Taoist priest Mak Cheung-tin (麥長天), Hung had established Fei Xia Dong (飛霞洞) monastery in Qingyuan (清遠) of Guangdong (廣東) province for the study of Taoism in early years of the Republic of China, prior to his arrival in Hong Kong. They also established Taoist monasteries in Guangzhou (廣州), Shanghai (上海), Singapore (新加坡), Burma (緬甸), Vietnam (越南).

Historical Interest

The *political instability* of China and *robbery* of Taoist monasteries induced them to choose Hong Kong as a place for the spread of Taoist thought. In 1932, Master Hung Hok-yung raised money from his believers and bought the lot of KIL No.2039 on the 6 March 1933 for the purpose of erect a monastery. Po Kok Monastery was established in 1935. The Monastery belongs to a branch of Taoism called Sin Tin Dao (先天道) worshipping several deities including Kwun Yam (觀音), Jade Emperor (玉皇大帝) Chai Tin Tai Shing (Monkey King 齊天大聖), Sakyamuni (佛祖), Lu Zu (呂祖) and Kwan Tai (關帝).

The Monastery is a three-storey building with a front garden, a pavilion and a side extension. It is constructed of concrete of the modern Eclectic style. It is a structure with halls for the worship of the deities, study rooms, store rooms and bedrooms with service facilities. Its entrance is with a verandah supported by two columns of Doric style. Its first floor is with a balcony above the verandah. At the entrance hall is a pagoda with niches housing gilded Buddhas. Behind the entrance hall is a light-well flanked by two bed-rooms. At the main hall is an altar houses the Maitreya Buddha (彌勒佛). A Kwun Yam Hall and a Sam Kau Din (三教殿) are respectively on the first and second floors. Its second floor also houses a memorial arch and two shrines. A name board Bun Ha Tung (寶霞洞) above the iron gate is at the external entrance of the forecourt.

Architectural Merit

It is a Taoist monastery established in 1935.

Rarity

It has some built heritage value. A renovation took place in 1962. The building is modernized with building materials and with added structures. This would diminish its authenticity.

Built Heritage Value Authenticity

During the Second World War, the Monastery was a refugee shelter of the Taoist priests and nuns. Some of them worked outside with their income to maintain the Monastery. It provides soul niches for worshippers to worship their ancestors. It holds Taoist ceremonies for the worship. It has celebrations for the festivals of the deities and provides vegetarian meals. The Monastery was registered as Bun Ha Tung Association Limited in 1989 which present abbess is Mother Yu Nga-shui (茹雅瑞).

***Social Value,
& Local
Interest***

Although surrounded by tall residential buildings, the Monastery still enjoys a private atmosphere with the buildings or rooms facing the courtyard or atrium. St. Joseph's Home for the Aged (聖約瑟安老院) is located at the Clear Water Bay Road nearby. Hammer Hill Road is connected to Choi Hung Road where the former Tai Hom Village is located. It is where the historic buildings namely Pillbox (機槍堡), Stone House (石寓) and Former Royal Airforce Hanger (前皇家空軍飛機庫) are found.

Group Value