

Historic Building Appraisal
Luk Wu Ching Ser – Main Building
Luk Wu Tsuen, Luk Wu, Lantau

Luk Wu Ching Ser (鹿湖精舍) in Luk Wu (鹿湖) of Lantau is a Buddhist *Historical Interest* nunnery developed from a Taoist monastery which was erected in the 9th year of the Guangxu (光緒, 1883) reign of the Qing (清) dynasty. The Shun Yeung Sin Yuen (純陽仙院, Shun Yeung Taoist Monastery) was set up by a Taoist Priest Luo Yuan-yi (羅元一道長). The Taoist monastery composed of a main hall for the male priests and a Pu Yun Monastery (普雲仙院) for female priests. The monastery was famous in the late Qing dynasty where a name board of the monastery was written by He Jing (何璟), a Viceroy of the Fujian and Zhejiang (閩浙總督) provinces. A couplet was also given by Liang Yaoshu (梁耀樞), a *zhuangyuan* (狀元) of the Guangdong (廣東) province. The work of Taoist Priest Luo was handed over to a Buddhist monk, Monk Guan Qing (觀清法師), in the early 20th century. Monk Guan Qing came from Jin Shan Temple (金山寺) of Zhenjiang (鎮江) who later transformed the Taoist monastery into a Buddhist one. He was an able monk who renamed the monastery as Chan Tang (禪堂) where both monks and nuns could practice meditation together. The monastery was occupied by a group of nuns after the death of Monk Guan Qing and they renamed it as Luk Wu Ching Ser in 1955.

Located on a levelled terrace of Luk Wu, the buildings of Luk Wu Ching Ser *Architectural Merit* are built in a row except the Shun Yeung Sin Yuen at their back. The main building, Tai Din (大殿), is in the middle of the row. It was first built in 1883 and repaired (including re-roofing) in 1955. The main building is a two-storey Qing vernacular design building having a two-hall-one-courtyard-side-chambers plan. The open courtyard is in the middle. The back hall is for worship purpose and other religious functions. Two living rooms are on both sides of the entrance lobby of the entrance hall. The building is constructed of concrete, stones and green bricks with its walls and columns to support its pitched roofs of timber rafters, purlins and clay tiles. The roofs are supported with later added reinforced concrete framework of beams and columns. The internal walls are plastered and painted whilst its external walls are painted only. The end hall houses an elaborated altar with big and small statues of gold colour Buddhas for worship. Banners and lanterns hanging from the ceiling are the main decoration of the hall. The columns painted red are with couplets. The doorframe of the recessed entrance is in granite carved with a couplet and bats. The lintel has the name of the nunnery engraved on it.

It was a Taoist monastery and has been a Buddhist nunnery since 1955 to witness the development of the two religions in Lantau. *Rarity*

It has some built heritage value.

Built Heritage Value

Despite some modern building materials added, its authenticity is kept.

Authenticity

It has group value with other buildings in the compound.

Group Value

It was most popular in the 1950-70s when about a hundred nuns and devotees studied Buddhist sutras and practiced meditation at the nunnery managed by the abbess Bhikshuni Yue Sau (比丘尼圓修). After her death in 1996 it was managed by Bhikshuni Foon Fat (比丘尼寬法). The nuns in the nunnery dropped to around 20 in the 1990s. It is with a few numbers of elderly nuns only and is managed by Bhikshuni Miu Wai (比丘尼妙慧).

*Social Value,
& Local
Interest*