

Historic Building Appraisal
Ting Wai Monastery (formerly known as Lan Yeuk Yuen)
No. 53 Ma Wo, Tai Po

Ting Wai Monastery (定慧寺) in Ma Wo (馬窩) of Tai Po was formerly known as Lan Yeuk Yuen (蘭若園) built by a group of Buddhist worshippers including Lee Bo Kwai (李葆葵), Lau Si Koo (劉四姑) and Kwan Ng Koo (關五姑) with their savings in 1921. A Monk Tsang Sau (增秀法師, 1883-1975) was invited from the Ding Wu Shan Hing Wan Monastery (鼎湖山慶雲寺) of Guangdong (廣東) province as its first abbot. In 1934 a Tai Hung Bo Din (大雄寶殿) was built to its right which provided a larger space for the worship of Buddha. In 1963 it became a non-profit organization and had its name changed to Ting Wai Monastery. After the retirement of Tsang Sau in 1966, Monk Mui Yui (茂蕊法師) became its abbot. According to available information, no significant historical event is associated with the monastery.

***Historical
Interest***

The monastery is a two-storey Chinese vernacular building of a square two-hall plan having a three-bay layout. It has a symmetrical design having an altar in the middle of the main hall in both of its storeys. A lightwell now covered with corrugated sheets, is between the entrance and main halls. Bedrooms are on both sides of the halls on both storeys. The building was constructed of green bricks and concrete with its walls and columns to support its pitched roofs. Its front façade is with a balcony on its upper floor and a verandah on its ground floor. Arched openings are on the upper floor with its columns extended to the lower floor. Vase-shaped balustrades are on the upper floor balcony. Its entrance is in the middle of the facing the altar at the opposite end of the main hall. Up above the balcony is a parapet with circular holes for decoration. It appears that the monastery underwent substantial alteration to its roofs which are now covered with yellow ceramic glazed tiles. So are the external walls with the bricks painted yellow. 'A pair of dragons chasing a pearl' ceramic decorations are on the main ridge. A pair of ceramic *zhengwens* (正吻) are on each end of the ridges.

***Architectural
Merit***

It is a Chinese monastery built with some western Renaissance features.

Rarity

It has a mix of Chinese and western architectural elements. A restoration was made in 1993 with the donation of a Monk Jen Wai (忍慧法師), originally called Ngan Siu-tong (顏兆桐), after his death in 1988.

***Built Heritage
Value***

Authenticity

During the beginning of the Second World War many monks and nuns stayed in the premises. Most of them however left due to the lack of food supply. Monk Tsang Sau stayed at the monastery during the period. Assemblies are organized for Buddhist devotees and the public by the monastery.

Social Value,
& Local
Interest