

## Historic Building Appraisal

### Muslim Cemetery

**Inland Lot No. 288, Wong Nai Chung Road, Happy Valley, Wan Chai, Hong Kong**

The Muslim Cemetery in Wong Nai Chung Road, Happy Valley (跑馬地黃泥涌道回教墳場) was established in the 1870s and has been serving the Muslim community. It is one of two Muslim cemeteries in Hong Kong, the other one being situated in Chai Wan. Before the construction of the Muslim Cemetery in Chai Wan, it was the only Muslim cemetery in Hong Kong. There used to be another one in Ho Man Tin, Kowloon but this was resumed and redeveloped in the early 1970s.

Muslims in Hong Kong have different ethnic backgrounds, in which more than half are Chinese. Others trace their ancestry to Pakistan, Indian, Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines, Arabia and Africa. The Muslim community has become conspicuous since Hong Kong came under British rule in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The British brought Muslim soldiers from India, and coming with them were Muslim merchants.

The entrance to the Cemetery is at the corner of Wong Nai Chung Road and Hau Tak Lane. The gateway is an **Islamic** arch with decorative Islamic script and a pair of ornamental steel gates in chequered pattern. The name of the cemetery in English and Chinese is fixed to the wall on the left hand side of the gateway. To the right of the gateway there are a series of structures backing on to Hau Tak Lane. These are used as offices, stores and mortuary rooms. They are not of architectural interest and can be classified as **Utilitarian**. The Cemetery is actually a small hill with terraces formed on the north slope by granite or concrete retaining walls. Concrete steps and paths are laid out around the Cemetery giving access to the graves. Most of the gravestones are quite simple, just plain headstones and kerb stones around the graves which are not paved over. The Cemetery is full of trees and greenery creating a pleasant environment rich in ecological resources.

Almost all gravestones standing at the west ends of the grave face the direction of Mecca (麥加) and the graves are only covered by soil on top.

The Muslim Cemetery in Happy Valley is the oldest Muslim cemetery in Hong Kong. It is an important piece of cultural landscape in Hong Kong with built heritage value. It appears to have retained its authenticity, although part of the Cemetery was resumed in the 1970s for the Aberdeen Tunnel access road.

The social value of the Cemetery lies in the important service it has provided to the local Muslim community since the 1870s. It is part of the historic cemetery

**Historical Interest**

**Architectural Merit**

**Rarity, Built Heritage Value & Authenticity**

**Social Value & Local**

complex in Happy Valley and is well known to the local community.

*Interest*

The adjoining Saint Michael's Catholic Cemetery (天主教聖彌額爾墳場 / 天主教墳場) is another famous local historic cemetery. The Sikh Temple (錫克教廟) is opposite to the Cemetery over Hau Tak Lane.

As far as is known the Government have no plan to resume the Cemetery and redevelop the site, so that the question of adaptive re-use does not arise.

*Adaptive Re-use*