

Historic Building Appraisal
Tsz Hing Monastery – Tai Hung Po Din
Man Cheung Po, Lantau

Tsz Hing Monastery (慈慶寺), composed of a number of buildings, is built on a levelled terrace of a steep slope in Man Cheung Po (萬丈布), north-west of Shek Pik (石壁) in Lantau. It takes an hour's walk from the Keung Shan Country Park Visitors' Centre (羌山郊野公園遊客中心) to the remote location of the monastery. The cloistered location of the monastery experiences the truth of "Rural Buddhism" (山林佛教), the traditional mode of life in Buddhist world. It was established by Monk To Lun (度輪法師) and developed from a site of the Kwok Ching Monastery (國清禪院) built by Monk Fa Chuen (法傳法師) in 1930 in order to provide a temporary accommodation for the monks who fled from China. *Historical Interest*

Part of Tsz Hing Monastery was damaged during the Japanese Occupation (1941-45) and Monk Fa Chuen was executed. With donations from the public, the monastery building was rebuilt in 1967. Monk To Lun made a number of visits to the United States introducing major works of the Mahayana Buddhist Canon (大乘法典). He was involved in the establishment of a number Buddhist temples and institutes for the study of Buddhist doctrines. The monastery has a reputation in providing accommodation for short period of staying (掛單) for all monks regardless of nationalities. It is managed by the Dharma Realm Buddhist Association (法界佛教總會) which has over 20 branches in different places.

The present **Tai Hung Po Din** (大雄寶殿) was built in **1967** on the damaged building of Kwok Ching Monastery. It is a Qing (清) vernacular design building having a one-hall plan of three bays. It is constructed of concrete and steel with its walls, beams and columns to support its flush gable pitched roof. The tall building is accessed by a flight of staircases in the middle bay. The external walls are plastered and painted in yellow colour and the columns and beams of the verandah are respectively in red and green colours. The roof is with green ceramic tiles and its ridge is with two ceramic *aoyus* (鰲魚) and a pearl. Above the doorway is the name of the monastery on a board written by the famous calligrapher Yu Youren (于右任, 1879-1964) of Guomindang (國民黨, i.e., Chinese Nationalist Party). *Architectural Merit*

It is a Buddhist monastery in the remote Man Cheung Po of Lantau to remind the history and development of Rural Buddhism in Hong Kong. *Rarity*

It has some built heritage value.

*Built Heritage
Value &*

The building is in good condition. The monastery is a local religious vernacular complex of long history. It blends nicely with the serene environment for personal retreat and worship and still enjoys its lofty position in the Buddhist world.

Authenticity

The monastery has the reputation overseas to provide accommodation for any monks to have short stay regardless of their nationalities. It has provided schools for the learning of Buddhist doctrines including the Lotus of the Good Law (法華經) which attracted a number of American monks.

*Social Value,
& Local
Interest*

It has group value with other buildings in the compound.

Group Value

It is considered that the question of adaptive re-use does not arise at the present time.

*Adaptive
Re-use*