

Historic Building Appraisal
Pun Chun Yuen – Tak Wai Tong
No. 17 Shek Lin Road, Kam Shan, Tai Po

Pun Chun Yuen (半春園) in Kam Shan (錦山) of Tai Po was established by a lay Buddhist Wong Se-wai (黃筱煒居士) in the 1930s as his residence and later in 1953 as a place for the development of Buddhism. Wong came from a wealthy family who had a big family of seven wives. He built seven houses for his wives and other facilities. The Wong family had business in China and Macau and was in wine business in Hong Kong with a company called Wing Lee Wai (永利威). The name Pun Chun derives from the Chinese characters “三”, “人”, “半” and “日” having the meaning of three people spending half-a-day (Se-wai and two of his friends) each day for the worship of Buddhism in the Yuen (園, garden). A Ta Ta Buddhist Society (哆哆佛學社) was set up in the Yuen for the promotion of Buddhism. Later the Yuen was transferred to the Lotus Association of Hong Kong (香海蓮社), a Buddhist body, in 1967. A lay Buddhist Tsang Pik-shan (曾璧山, 1890-1986), one of the founders of the Lotus Association, lived in the Yuen. It became a mandala (道場) for the worship of Buddhism by the public.

**Historical
Interest**

After the Lotus Association took over the Yuen in 1967, it was much expanded. The Tai Hung Po Din (大雄寶殿, the main hall for worship) and the Tak Wai Tong (德煒堂) were renovated. Some other buildings, including the Kwun Yam Dien (觀音殿), Ti Chong Dien (地藏殿) Chong King Kok (藏經閣) and Sze Tsan Tong (思親堂) were built after the 1970s.

**Architectural
Merit**

Tak Wai Tong was constructed at the outbreak of the Second world War. It is in the west of the Yuen accessed through a flight of staircases. It was a big single-storey rectangular hall for the Yuen to work as a mandala for festival and solemnity activities. It was for worship and for vegetarian meals for the large amount of visitors to the Yuen. It is constructed of concrete with six circular columns standing in a 2: 3 proportion in the hall. In the middle of the hall is a void having skylight penetrating to the hall. In the middle of the end wall is an altar with three statues of Buddhas for worship. The hall has been modernized in western style with its external and internal walls covered with mosaic tiles and painted. An upper storey called Mong Wan Lo (望雲廬) was added in 1967 with an L-shaped verandah for accommodation of visitors and worshippers. An annex block was also added at the back for kitchen and toilet use.

It is a building to record the history of the Yuen and the development of Buddhism in Hong Kong.

Rarity

It has little built heritage value.

*Built Heritage
Value*

Alterations have been made to the building which authenticity has not been kept.

Authenticity

It has group value with other buildings and structures in the Yuen.

Group Value

Tsang Pik-shan was an educator and philanthropist who established the Sung Lan School (崇蘭女子學校) in Happy Valley to commemorate her teacher Chan Sung-lan (陳崇蘭), a disciple of the renowned scholar of modern China, Kang You-wei (康有為, 1858-1927). To show her gratitude and to commemorate Se-wai, Pik-shan established a Buddhist Wong Se-wai Memorial School (佛教黃筱煒紀念學校) in 1982. A Tsang Pik Shan Secondary School (曾璧山中學) was established in 1990 named after her.

*Social Value,
& Local
Interest*