

Historic Building Appraisal
Sin Fat Hang Yuen (in the Nam On Buddhist Monastery)
Fu Tei Ha Tsuen, Tuen Mun

Nam On Buddhist Monastery (南安佛堂) is one of the few monasteries which main deity is the Monkey King (猴王). It is situated in Fu Tei Ha Tsuen (虎地下村) in the northern part of Tuen Mun (屯門) comprising four buildings, namely, the Nam On Buddhist Monastery (the Main temple), Sin Fat Hang Yuen (仙佛行轅, guest house of Buddha), Fuk Tak Temple (福德祠) and Shing Wong Temple (城隍廟). A monastery is allegedly built in the 6th year of Daoguang reign (道光, 1826) of the Qing dynasty in the area. It was also said that in the mid-1940s the temple was in a matshed form and the villagers rebuilt it in the present place. The temple was expanded in 1968 and came to the present form in the 1970s. The Fuk Tak Temple and Shing Wong Temple were added in 1964 and renovated together with the other two buildings in the 1970s.

Historical Interest

The villagers who lived near the temple were Hoklos (鶴佬) coming from Haifeng (海豐) and Lufeng (陸豐) in the 1940-50s who worshipped a number of deities. The monastery then housed different deities and the main one is the Buddhist Tai Shing (大聖佛祖), known as the Monkey King or Chai Tin Tai Shing (齊天大聖).

The Sin Fat Hang Yuen is at the back of the monastery building. It is also in Qing vernacular design having one hall with a colonnaded veranda to its front. An altar and an offering table are at the far end of the hall. The concrete building has pitched roofs composed of rafters and purlins. Its floor is paved with red unglazed ceramic tiles. The gables are in the shape of two-point axe head, known as the 'wood' style (木) of the Five Elements (五行) of the Chinese construction principles. On its ridge is a set of plastered moulding of a pearl chasing by two dragons.

Architectural Merit

The monastery is a rare type of temple in Hong Kong.

Rarity

It has some built heritage value despite its young age. The 1970s structure of the monastery is retained.

Built Heritage Value & Authenticity

The monastery building, the Sin Fat Hang Yuen, Fuk Tak Temple and the Shing Wong Temple are inter-related having their group value.

Group Value

In the past the birthday of the Buddha Tai Shing on the 16th day of the eighth lunar month was highly celebrated with Hoklo and Chaozhou (潮州) opera performances and rituals of stepping burning charcoals and ladder knives with bare foot. The activities however have been ceased to operate due to lack of funding. Festivals of the deities are celebrated in the temples.

*Social Value,
& Local
Interest*