

Historic Building Appraisal
Kai Yuen - Main Building & Ancillary Building
No. 29A Ha Fa Shan, Tsuen Wan, N.T.

Kai Yuen (祇園) was a Buddhist temple constructed in Ha Fa Shan (下花山) of Tsuen Wan (荃灣) some 70 years ago. It was established by Monk Yui Sim (裔禪法師) who moved the temple from Guangxi (廣西) province to Hong Kong. Deities Amitabha (阿彌陀佛), Mahasthamaprapta (大勢至菩薩) and Kwun Yam (觀音, Goddess of Mercy) were worshipped at the temple. Kai Yuen was supposed to be built at a good *fungshui* (風水) site. It has an unobstructed view of Tsuen Wan and is backed by a range of mountains. The terrain at the northwest of the main building symbolizes a tortoise climbing up the hill which was said to be a good *fungshui* setting.

Historical Interest

In the old days, Kai Yuen provided education to nuns and monks, and raised some children. It also provided vegetarian meals for worshippers and visitors. The monks and nuns had agricultural farming close to the temple in the past. The temple was destroyed by the Japanese during the Second World War (1941-1945) and rebuilt after the war. During the Civil War in China (1945-1949), the temple also provided temporary shelter for monks and nuns who fled to Hong Kong.

The temple is a Chinese Eclectic style of building of two storeys. It is constructed of granite blocks and concrete with its walls and columns to support its pitched roof. A verandah is on the ground floor at the front façade. Above the verandah is a balcony topped with a parapet. A pediment is in the middle of the parapet. The balcony is having a flat roof. The four columns of the balcony are extended to the verandah. The main hall is in the middle of the ground floor with one side hall on its left and right. An altar is at the end wall of the main hall with only a few number of soul tablets for worship. The walls are plastered. The ridge of the pitched roof is with curling ends.

Architectural Merit

It is a temple to remind the development of Buddhism in the area.

Rarity

It has some built heritage value.

Built Heritage Value

The building is in poor condition. Its authenticity is diminished.

Authenticity

Many monks and nuns fled to Hong Kong in 1949 and stayed in the temple. Monk Yui Sim provided lessons for young monks and nuns in the temple where they learnt Buddhist scriptures. The temple employed a number of maids and servants for the preparation of vegetarian meals. They were also given

Social Value, & Local Interest

accommodation at the ancillary building to its left.

Kai Yuen has a similar appearance to Lung Wah Yuen (龍華園) in Fung Chi Tsuen in Wang Chau of Yuen Long (元朗橫洲鳳池村), which is a mixed style building serving as a nunnery.

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