

Historic Building Appraisal
Wai Sau Yuen – Main Building & Kitchen
Luk Wu Tsuen, Luk Wu, Lantau

Wai Sau Yuen (慧修院) is a nunnery built among valleys north of Keung Shan (羌山) in Luk Wu Tsuen (鹿湖村) of Luk Wu (鹿湖), Lantau, in 1933 by Jushi Sing Sau (聖修居士) (*jushi* is a person who practices Buddhism at home without becoming a monk or a nun). She is a Bhikshuni (比丘尼, Sanskrit) called Sik Liu-sau (釋了修), the first abbess of the nunnery. She learnt Buddhist sutras from Monk Mou Fung (茂峰法師) who was the founder of Tung Po Tor Monastery (東普陀寺) in Tsuen Wan. The monastery donated \$1,000 for the erection of the nunnery. Chan Mui-sang (陳梅生) was the builder of the nunnery who had also built the nearby Fat Chuen Chi (佛泉寺) and the Nian Fu Tang (念佛堂) of Luk Wu Ching Ser (鹿湖精舍). The nunnery is dedicated to Kwun Yam (觀音). The nunnery was vacated during the Japanese Occupation (1941-45) and left dilapidated. After the war, the building was restored. The present abbess is Sik Liu-hung (釋了空).

***Historical
Interest***

Built on a terrace facing west, the nunnery is a two-storey Chinese vernacular building of three bays. It is constructed of cement, granite blocks and bricks with its walls to support its pitched roofs of timber rafters, purlins and clay tiles. The walls are plastered and painted. The front façade is three-bayed with the recessed middle entrance in the middle bay. The other two bays have their own separate entrances. Up on the first floor are their balconies fenced with balustrades of geometric pattern. The wall of the entrance bay is with masonry block imitation lines. Above the doorway is the name of the nunnery written in black on yellow ground. A couplet is on the doorway. Wall paintings of landscape are under the eave. The middle bay is the worship hall of the nunnery housing an altar with statues of the deity. Rows of seats are in front of the altar for sutra recitation. Bedrooms are at the two storeys of the side bays. An annex of a two-storey kitchen built in the 1970s is on the left of the nunnery building. A gateway of two square columns topped with a triangular pediment is at the entrance access road of the nunnery.

***Architectural
Merit***

It is a Buddhist nunnery to witness the development of Buddhism in Hong Kong.

Rarity

It has some built heritage value.

***Built Heritage
Value***

Its authenticity is kept.

Authenticity

Sik Chun-ming (釋真明), an abbess in the nunnery, once gave primary classes to children in the area after the Second World War at the nunnery when there was no proper school nearby. She organized classes to learn Buddhist sutras inviting monks from outside. She was endorsed as a Bhikshuni by Monk Fa Ke (筏可法師) of the Po Lin Monastery (寶蓮禪寺). The Kwun Yam Festival (觀音誕) on the 19th of the sixth lunar month would be celebrated among the nuns, *jushis* and their close friends of the nunnery.

***Social Value,
& Local
Interest***