

Historic Building Appraisal
Tung Po Tor Monastery – Yuen Tung Bo Din
Lo Wai Road, Tsuen Wan

Tung Po Tor Monastery (東普陀) in Lo Wai (老圍) of Tsuen Wan was established by Monk Mou Fung (茂峰法師) in 1929 including a main hall called Yuen Tung Bo Din (圓通寶殿) and an entrance hall called Tin Wong Din (天王殿) separated by an open courtyard in between. New buildings have been constructed on the left of the former and on both sides of the latter. Monk Mou Fung was a monk of the famous Qingyun Monastery (慶雲寺) in Zhaoqing (肇慶) of Guangdong (廣東) province in 1916 and then he spent five years to study the Tripitaka (大藏經) in Nanjing (南京). He was invited in 1927 by some local scholars including Lai Chai-hei (賴際熙) and Lady Cheung Lin-kwok (張蓮覺), wife of Sir Ho Tung (何東爵士), to lecture Buddhist doctrine in Fat Yuen Tong (發源堂) at Mosque Street (摩羅廟街). As the number of participants increased, Monk Mou Fung decided to build a temple for the purpose. The site at Lo Wai was chosen and the fund contributed from his followers. The construction of the building started in 1929 was completed in 1933. The scenery of the nearby area is similar to that of the Poutuo Mountain (普陀山) of Zhejiang (浙江) province that the name of the monastery is thus named as Tung Po Tor (東普陀, literally Poutuo Mt. in Guangdong).

***Historical
Interest***

Yuen Tung Bo Din is a two-storey Qing (清) vernacular design building having a one-hall plan of three bays with a side hall on each side both fronted by a verandah. The building is constructed of concrete and stone with its walls, columns and beams to support its pitched roofs of timber rafters, purlins and clay tiles. The external walls are plastered and painted in earth yellow colour. The verandah is supported by red round columns and entrances of the halls are with wooden brown folding doors. The main altar in the middle of the hall houses an 11-foot statue of Kwun Yam (觀音) with a jade Buddha in her front. At their back are three statues of Armitabha (阿彌陀佛), Kwun Yam and Mahasthamaprapta (大勢至菩薩), Three Saints from the West (西方三聖), and a bronze statue of Buddha. A side chamber is on each side of the main hall. The left one is called Hak Tong (客堂, Hall for the Guests) in which a shrine is erected for the monastery's donators to gain the patronage of the Buddha. The right one is called Tso Tong (祖堂, Ancestral Hall) where an altar is at the end wall housing the soul tablets of Monk Mou Fung, his followers and other worshippers for worship. The upper floor used to be a library of sutra (佛經). It is now a classroom for young monks of Buddhism classes. Its ridge is with ceramic decorations including two dragons, a pearl, *aoyus* (鰲魚) and *longwens* (龍吻).

***Architectural
Merit***

It is a monastery to reflect the development of Buddhism in Hong Kong.

Rarity

It has some built heritage value.

*Built Heritage
Value*

It is in good condition. Its authenticity is kept.

*Authenticity
Group Value*

It has group value with the Tin Wong Din and other buildings in the monastery.

The monastery offers a three-year elementary course of Buddhism for 18 young monks from China. After their graduation, they would have three years of intermediate course at the Lifo Monastery (禮佛禪寺) in Boluo County (博羅) of Guangdong and three years of advanced course at the Hongfa Monastery (弘法寺) of Shenzhen (深圳). After that they would preach in different temples in China. Half of the students resided in the monastery. Yuk Fat (浴佛節) and the Kwun Yam Festivals (觀音誕) celebrated with reciting of scripture, offerings and vegetarian meals are the only few occasions the monastery open to the public.

*Social Value,
& Local
Interest*