

Historic Building Appraisal

Chuk Lam Sim Yuen

Fu Yung Shan, Tusen Wan

Chuk Lam Sim Yuen (竹林禪院) in Fu Yung Shan (芙蓉山) of Tsuen Wan was built between 1928 and 1932 by Monk Yung Chau (融秋法師, 1887-1976) with some Buddhist disciples. They belong to the Rinzaï Sect (臨濟宗) of Zen Sect (禪宗). The monastery was one of the largest temples in Hong Kong in the early 1980s, comprising an U-shaped Tin Wong Dien (天王殿) in the front, a Tai Hung Po Dien (大雄寶殿) in the centre courtyard and an inverted-U-shaped Fau To Po Dien (浮屠寶殿) at the back. The Fau To Po Dien was completed in 1932 for the worship of Kshitigarbha Buddha (地藏菩薩). There is a model wooden pagoda (浮屠, Fau To) of seven storeys (七級浮屠) in the building. The pagoda has 45 tiny figurines of Buddhas made in Zhaoqing (肇慶) of Guangdong (廣東) province in around 1931. The building is therefore named as Fau To. Tin Wong Dien and Tai Hung Po Dien were built in 1982.

**Historical
Interest**

Fau To Po Dien block is a concrete structure, with a pitched roof laid with green glazed tiles. The building is surrounded with a high ceiling verandah in its front facade. The verandah is supported by square columns fenced with green vase-shaped balustrades. The entrance is divided into bays with red wooden folding doors. It is a two-storey building with a Pagoda Hall for the worship of the Buddha. The gold colour statue made of mud of the Kshitigarbha Buddha is at the altar for worship. Two other halls for the worship of Manjushri Buddha (藥師佛) and for the Kwun Yam (觀音) are at the right and left wings of the building. Its flanking wings are not identical both in size and shape. The ground floor of the left wing houses the monastery's offices, a huge dining hall with a kitchen. The ground floor of the right wing is with bedrooms. The upper floors are with living rooms and bedrooms with service facilities for monks, nuns and retired amahs.

**Architectural
Merit**

Chuk Lam Sim Yuen has borne witness to the development of Buddhism in Hong Kong and was one of the largest temples in Hong Kong in the early 1980s. It has some built heritage value. Fau To Po Dien was renovated in 1953. No significant alteration which may have diminished its authenticity can be identified.

**Rarity, Built
Heritage
Value and
authenticity**

The monastery provided residence for monks and nuns who fled to Hong Kong between the late 1940s and the early 1950s. It has also provided short stay residence for visiting monks and nuns from overseas. The monastery could provide a capacity of accommodation for some 100-150 people. It took many retired maids (amahs) providing life-long residence and funeral service and cremation after their death. The monastery is one of the monasteries which have the license from the government to operate cremation.

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

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