

Historic Building Appraisal

Fat Chuen Chi

Luk Wu Tsuen, Luk Wu, Lantau

Fat Chuen Chi (佛泉寺) is located in Luk Wu Tsuen (鹿湖村, literally Deer Lake Village) of Lantau Island. The place was named as such since where deer could be found in the past and where the landscape looks like a lake. This Buddhist monastery accommodates monks who isolate themselves from the busy and noisy outside world and practice their pure and quiet self-cultivation.

*Historical
Interest*

Fat Chuen Chi is also called San Bao Dian (三寶殿) and a board inscribed with “三寶殿” was cast on the wall. The term “San Bao” originates from Sanskrit’s *Triratna* or *Ratnatraya*, i.e. the “Three Precious” or “Three Values”: *Buddha* (佛), *Dharma* (法, the Law) and *Sangha* (僧, the Ecclesia or Order). San Bao are referred to as the three images or Bodhisattvas (三寶佛), namely, Sakyamuni (釋迦牟尼), Bhaisajya (藥師) and Amitabha (阿彌陀).

The construction of Fat Chuen Chi was funded in 1933 by three members of a Leung family, namely, **Leung Yin-tin** (梁硯田), **Leung Sai-sun** (梁世新) and **Leung Lo Kam-wing** (梁廬錦榮) who originated from Panyu in Guangdong (廣東番禺). Their photographs are still hung on the wall in the monastery. The construction contract was awarded to a local builder, Chan Mui-sang (陳梅生).

It is perhaps noteworthy that the monastery was associated to an Englishman **Mr Hisst** (許士德). Mr Hisst became a *jushi* (居士, i.e., a person who practice Buddhism at home without becoming a monk or a nun) and presented a wooden board to the monastery in the 1930s after his wish came true after praying in the monastery. Inscribed with Chinese characters 佛自西來 (*fu zi xi lai*, literally Buddha comes from the West, i.e., the western heaven of Amitabha [西天 or 天竺國 in Buddhist learning], the board can still be seen.

The first abbots (住持) of the monastery were two Buddhist law-scholars, **Shun-ho** (信可法師) and **Tak-yin** (德賢法師). The monastery was abandoned after the 1960s and taken care of by Monk Chi Tong (智同法師) and Monk Miu Man (妙文法師) of Po Lin Monastery (寶蓮禪寺) who used the building for lecturing Buddhist sutras. It was abandoned again later and now managed by Bhikshuni Miu Wai (比丘尼妙慧) of Luk Wu Ching Ser (鹿湖精舍) at its back.

On a levelled terrace, Fat Chuen Chi is a Qing (清) vernacular design building having a two-hall-one-courtyard plan with two side chambers (二進毗連式四合院). The open courtyard is between the entrance and main halls. Two chambers of different sizes are on its left and right. The building is constructed of concrete, stones and red bricks with its wall, columns and beams to support its pitched roofs of timber rafters, purlins and clay tiles. The finely carved and

*Architectural
Merit*

decorated altar is at the end wall of the main hall housing the three statues of Sakyamuni (釋迦牟尼佛), Bhaisajya (藥師佛) and Amitabha (阿彌陀佛) for worship. The front entrance accessed through a flight of staircases is recessed with two concrete columns, two beams and the side walls to support the roof. The two tall columns are engraved with a couplet and so is the doorframe. The name of the monastery is above the doorway. The front walls of the façade are with masonry block imitation lines. The front ridge is with two ceramic *aoyus* (鰲魚) and a pearl. There is a marble plant pot of the 9th year of the reign of Emperor Guangxu of Qing Dynasty (清朝光緒九年) remaining in the courtyard.

It is a monastery on Lantau to witness the development of Buddhism in Hong Kong. **Rarity**

It has some built heritage value. It is in good condition and its authenticity is kept. It blends nicely with the surrounding rural environment where trees and buildings of similar designs remain. **Built Heritage Value & Authenticity**

Buddhist classes were given by Monk Shun Ho, Monk Tak Yin and others before and after the Second World War, the busiest time being the 1950 and 1960s when many *jushi* and devotees attended lessons to study Buddhist sutras. **Social Value, & Local Interest**

Together with other institutions in Luk Wu Tsuen, Ng Chit (悟徹, erected in 1913) and Chuk Yuen Ching Ser (竹園精舍, erected in 1933), it is one of the Buddhist establishments to remind the development of Buddhism in the area. **Group Value**

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