

Historic Building Appraisal
Chi Chuk Lam - Pavilion
Lower Keung Shan, Lantau

Located in a levelled terrace of Lower Keung Shan (下羌山) of Lantau, Chi Chuk Lam (紫竹林) is a Buddhist nunnery founded in 1918 by three Bhikshunis (比丘尼), namely, Fat Wai (法慧), Fat Sum (發心) and Fat Sheung (法常). In 1916, the three ladies had their Bhikshuni ordination in Tai Mao Pung (大茅蓬, renamed as Po Lin Monastery (寶蓮禪寺) in 1928. Fat Sum became the first abbess of the nunnery until her death in around 1958. She was succeeded by Fok Kai-chiu (霍戒超, 1897-1996) who had her first ordination at the Dinghubaolian Monastery (鼎湖寶蓮寺) of Foshan (佛山) in 1915, came to Hong Kong in 1917 and stayed in the nunnery since 1919. Abbess Fok passed away in 1996 and was succeeded by the present abbess Mother Ting Moon (定滿師傅, 1942-), who is a native of Tai O and has resided in the nunnery since aged 4.

*Historical
Interest*

Chi Chuk Lam is a private nunnery for the study of Buddhist sutras. Its devoted deity is Kwun Yam (觀音) with Wai Tor (韋陀) as the protective deity. The present **Main Building** of Chi Chuk Lam had been a one-storey stone house built in the Guangxu (光緒, 1871-1908) reign of the Qing (清) dynasty. It was rebuilt into two-storey premises in **1918**.

The **Pavilion** called Chi Chi Ting (至止亭) **built in 1913** is a short distance opposite the main building. It is a western style pavilion in an L-shape plan. It is probably constructed of bricks and stone with its columns to support its pitched roof. The front portion of the structure is with two arched openings on either side. The middle of each of the moulded arches is with a key stone. The columns are with mouldings for decoration. The walls are plastered and painted with white colour. Long rows of seats are provided along the walls.

*Architectural
Merit*

Together with other nunneries in Lower Keung Shan, Po Lin Shut (寶蓮室, erected in 1916), Ng Chun Nunnery (悟真, erected in 1927) and Ling Yan Monastery (靈隱寺, erected in 1928), it is one of the Buddhist establishments to remind the development of Buddhism in the area.

Rarity

It has some built heritage value.

*Built Heritage
Value*

Its authenticity is kept.

Authenticity

There were some 20 residents in the nunnery after the Second World War, half of them were *jushis* (居士) and the others were nuns. Now only Mother Ting Moon and her brother Chan Sau (陳秀) stay in the nunnery. Most of the elderly nuns either passed away or have been arranged to stay in the elderly home.

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

Chi Chuk Lam is built in local vernacular style that reflects the old building construction customs on Lantau at that time. It is a typical part of Lantau original culture. A number of buildings of similar design remain in the surroundings. It blends nicely with the remote rural environment that is full of trees. There are two small shrines and a small pavilion of Western style on the back sloped and downhill of the monastery. The pavilion housed a plaque of the second year of the Republic (1913;民國二年). Ng Chun and Po Lin Shut are the other religious heritage buildings neighbouring Chi Chuk Lam. Master Ting Moon (定滿師傅), the abbess (住持, literally the nunnery head) of Chi Chuk Lam nowadays, has close relationship with Ng Chit and Wai Sau Yuen in Luk Wu.

Group Value

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

***Adaptive
Re-use***