

**Historic Building Appraisal**  
**Miu Kok Yuen**  
**No. 13 Fung Kat Heung, Yuen Long**

Miu Kok Yuen (妙覺園) in Fung Kat Heung (逢吉鄉) of Yuen Long was built by the Tang (鄧) clan of Kam Tin (錦田) in 1936 which includes a main building, two annex buildings for the nuns, a communal graveyard (義塚) and an Earth God (土地) shrine. In the occupation battles of the New Territories with the British in 1899, the sacrificed villagers of the Tang clan in Kat Hing Wai (吉慶圍) and Tai Hong Wai (泰康圍) of Kam Tin were buried at the foothill of Kai Kung Leng (雞公嶺). A temple of Kshitigarbha Buddha (地藏王), a savior of souls in the underworld, was erected in the area by the Tangs to pacify the martyrs some one hundred years ago. The temple however was later demolished. In 1934, Tung Fuk Tong (同福堂) of the Tangs wanted to build a communal graveyard for the martyrs. They donated money to a *bhiksunis* (比丘尼) Sik Miu-tong (釋妙通法師) to build a nunnery, a graveyard and other facilities which was completed in 1936. The two annex buildings were for the quarters of the nuns and now hired out to elder women called ‘vegetarian recluses’ (齋姑) who are responsible for the upkeep and operation of the nunnery.

***Historical  
Interest***

The main building, Tai Hung Bo Din (大雄寶殿), of the nunnery is a one-hall Qing (清) vernacular temple built on a terrace. It is constructed of green bricks with its walls to support its pitched roofs of timber rafters, purlins and red clay tiles. The two-storey building is symmetrical with the altar in the rear end in the middle housing three statues of the Three Precious Buddhas (三寶佛). One room is on either side of the altar with a staircase behind the altar for access to the upper floor. The walls are with a five-stretcher courses to one-header course (五順一丁) brick bonding. Above the recessed entrance of is the name board of the building. Under the eave is a wall frieze of calligraphy and flowers wall painting. A fascia board with flowers and plants carving is in front of the wall frieze. The communal grave is to the south-east of the main building. An Earth God (土地) shrine is between the main building and the entrance gate housing. It is a small house with statues of the Earth God and Kwun Yam (觀音) and portraits of Lui Tso (呂祖) and Tin Hau (天后).

***Architectural  
Merit***

It is a nunnery to witness the glorious death of the Tang martyrs in the takeover of the New Territories by the British in 1899.

***Rarity***

It has considerable built heritage value.

***Built Heritage  
Value***

The windows of the main building have been changed into aluminium ones in a renovation in 2002. This would diminish its authenticity.

***Authenticity***

The nunnery was kept by a Sik Yin-tak (釋賢德法師) who was also the principal of the Hong Kong Buddhist College (香港能仁書院) in 1986-1991. Kwun Yam Festivals were celebrated on the 19<sup>th</sup> day of the second, sixth and ninth lunar months with vegetarian banquets. But this has been discontinued. Ceremonies of *kajing* (開經, praying for blessing) and *jiejing* (結經, thanksgiving to gods) are organized in the first and last lunar months respectively. Buddha Festival (佛誕) on the 8<sup>th</sup> day of the fourth lunar month would be celebrated where worshippers can chant Buddhist scriptures and have vegetarian meals.

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