

Buddhist and Taoist Temples in Tai Po

YAU Chi On, NGAI Ting Ming

Introduction

Temples and monasteries are main venues for Chinese religious worship, and yet they play roles far beyond religion in Chinese society. They form integral parts of our daily lives, labour and production, and the pursuit of personal growth. After in-depth observation and analysis of these temples, one can see that religion is indeed indispensable to every aspect of life in traditional China. As the saying goes, "there is a god three feet above us." Chinese people believe that an unexplainable force connects things visible and invisible. To deny that such a force exists is to be blind to the development and changes in Chinese society throughout history.

Development of Tai Po began later than other districts in Hong Kong. In particular, the ban on seafaring in the Ming Dynasty and the evacuation of the coast (Qianjie) in the Qing Dynasty, which forced coastal settlement inland severely stunted the district's growth. The only settlers in Tai Po at the time, such as the Mans and Tses of Wun Yiu, were relocated. Nevertheless, although these early settlers were pioneers in a strange land, they still greatly revered their gods. In the 9th year of the Daoguang Reign (1829), the Mas – who had relocated to Wun Yiu – rebuilt the God of the Earth Temple in the village:

The origin of the God of the Earth Temple in Wun Yiu is unknown, as is its age and builder. It has always radiated an aura of grandeur.¹

After the Qianjie ended, the Mas moved to Wun Yiu from Changle in the 13th year of the Kangxi Reign (1674). It had been ten years since the campaign in the early years of the Kangxi Reign, but the temple retained its original grandeur and beauty, reflecting painstaking efforts invested by the unknown villagers who built it.

After the original territory was reinstated, a large number of migrants arrived in Hong Kong from Guangdong and a new chapter in Tai Po's history began. As the settlers came from different regions in China, many villages in

Tai Po hosted different lineages. The worship of Kwan Tai (Guan Yu) became a special custom for these villages, as it united the villagers in the battle against natural and human disasters. Many villages built Kwan Tai Temples and examples are Kwan Tai Temple in Ting Kok, Hip Tin Temple in Po Sum Pai, Hip Tin Temple in Cheung Shue Tan and Mo Tai Temple in Wun Yiu.

At the same time, migrants from the Mainland gradually established their livelihood in Tai Po with their own typical characteristics. Some special forms of local worship began to emerge. For example, Fan Sin ("Fan Xian" in Putonghua) Temple in Wun Yiu looked after the pottery business of the Ma family, while Tai Wong Yeh Temple was built in Yuen Chau Tsai for the lives and mutual development of the boat people and those living on land. These temple gods were deeply integrated into every aspect of the villagers' lives. Celebrations for deities' birthdays and Taiping Qingjiao (Dajiao), ceremonial occasions, fortune telling, medical consultancy, village meetings and even award presentation and punishments all took place inside the temples. Blessed by these gods, the migrants finally planted their roots in Tai Po.

In modern times, China has experienced drastic changes that have impeded the development of traditional religion. Some high-ranking monks travelled south to Hong Kong to spread the established religions of China, and gradually changed the face of traditional religions in Hong Kong. At this time, Tai Po was largely an agricultural society and people were simple and unconcerned with the outside world. The district was also blessed with wonderful landscapes and it became an ideal place of seclusion for reaching Buddhist enlightenment. At the same time, Tai Po was conveniently connected with the outside world, with Tolo Harbour providing an outlet by sea. In 1911, the Kowloon Canton Railroad went into operation and Tai Po Station brought the district closer to Hong Kong's developing areas. Since then, Tai Po has become, in essence, part of Hong Kong and has progressed with the city's urbanisation, no longer an impoverished town in Guangdong's Xin-An County.



These favourable conditions gave rise to Tai Po's emergence as an ideal site for Hong Kong's Buddhist and Taoist worship sites. Beginning in the 1920s, many Buddhist and Taoist sites were established in Tai Po. The founders of these sites included traditional spiritual leaders, such as Master Tin Siu Tsuen of Sin Tin Tao and the Honourable Buddhist Master Zeng Siu, as well as "rising stars" such as the brave Master Bhiksuni Tsz Chueng and Master Chan Tsz Shek, who explored the mysteries of life. There were also people of humble origins, such as Yee Gu, a spiritual medium to the other world, and even merchants, such as lay Buddhist Wong Siu Wai. These founders selected Tai Po for its beautiful natural environment. The lectoriums, including To Yuen Tung, Yan Lo Buddhist Monastery, Tai Kwong Yuen, Pun Chun Yuen, Lo Fung Academy and Man Tak Yuen, were built for quiet study and contemplation, but they do not shun contact with the community at large. For example, To Yuen Tung is the main lectorium of the Sin Tin Tao sect and maintains close contact with other Sin Tin Tao lectorium in Hong Kong. Yan Lo Buddhist Monastery is in fact a branch lectorium and the main one is in the city. Meanwhile, Master Tsz Cheung of Tai Kwong Yuen enjoyed travel-study, and was often invited for travel lectures. As for Pun Chun Yuen, it provided the venue for a half-day retreat for the founders, who were largely city dwellers. Whether the founders were city dwellers who sought escape to realise lofty goals of enlightenment in the countryside, or recluses who only occasionally contacted the outside world, the railroad connected the world of the worship sites and that of the city, which at first glance seem to represent conflicting ideals. However, in reality, these worship sites big and small, have taken part in Hong Kong's development. Having undergone their own modernisation, these sites have changed the face of traditional Chinese religion as Hong Kong has evolved into a metropolis.

Even though the worship sites retained close contact with the rest of Hong Kong, their establishment and development still depended heavily on support from the locals in Tai Po. Many residents of Tai Po originated from the Mainland and thus did not oppose outsiders. Since they too came from elsewhere, they were more understanding

of migrants from far away who sought opportunities in Tai Po, and could appreciate them more. Some founders of the worship sites in Tai Po came from different areas of Guangdong – from Chaoshan in the east to Dinghu in the west, and from Guangzhou in the south to Feixia in the north. When they settled in Tai Po and founded their worship sites, the locals did not reject their worship as cults but participated in their religion instead. Most locals treated different faiths with the same respect, whether it was an established religion like Buddhism and Taoism, a local mixture of Buddhism and Taoism like the Sin Tin Tao sect, or a legendary temple god they were familiar with like Fan Sin, Kwan Tai and the Taoist Lord Laozi. They believed in the essence of these religions, in doing good deeds and praying with an untainted mind. Blessings from the gods would come with devout worship. In return, the temples made great efforts to provide services to the people. Sing Kung Cho Tong offered free medical services, while spiritual mediums interpreted messages from the other world at Fung Loi Leung Yuen and Sung Sum To Tak Tan. Tai Kwong Yuen, meanwhile, provided free education. Some of the founders' stories are still reminisced about by the locals today. Tin Siu Tsuen was known for being knowledgeable and kind, where Yee Gu was an amazing spirit medium. The worship sites formed mutually beneficial relationships with local residents, and they have established deep roots in the common people's lives and become an indispensable part of Tai Po's communal history.

Taoist worship sites in Tai Po can be categorised into singong (immortals' palace), langyuan ("leung yuen" in Cantonese) and lectoriums. These include Fan Sin Temple in Wun Yiu Heung, Sing Kung Cho Tong (worshipping Master Guangcheng) in Ting Kok Road, Fung Loi Leung Yuen (worshipping Lu Tsu, the Eight Immortals, the Jade Emperor (Yudi) and Dragon Mother (Lungmu) in Pun Shan Chau Village, Sung Sum To Tak Tan (worshipping Taoist Lord Luzi) in Tai Po Kau Village. The lectoriums mainly worship Lu Tzu, and examples are Yan Lo Buddhist Monastery and Man Tak Yuen. As for Buddhist sites, there are Ting Wai Monastery, Tai Kwong Yuen, and Pun Chun Yuen of the Lotus Association of Hong Kong among others.



The following introduces Taoist and Buddhist worship sites established in Tai Po from the Qing Dynasty to the 1970s, in chronological order.

Taoist Temples

Foreword

There are a few places in Hong Kong that host a number of Taoist and Buddhist worship sites including the area between Fung Wong Shan and Keung Shan on Lantau Island, between Fu Yung Shan and Sam Dip Tam in Tsuen Wan, in the hills above Pai Tau Village in Shatin, and from Kam Shan and Shek Kwu Lung and Ma Wo Shan to To Yuen Tung (such as Ting Wai Monastery, Tai Kwong Yuen, Pun Chun Yuen and Yan Lo) in Tai Po. Ng Ba Ling mentions Yan Lo and Fung Loi Leung Yuen when he writes about Tai Po (see *Guide to Travel in Tai Po* (大埔遊覽示意圖)):

*Yan Lo, located in Kam Shan Village, is built along the hills and contains a world of its own. To Yuen Tung, situated upon a small stream behind Pan Chung, has four chambers – Shui Yuet Temple, Siu Village Quiet Chamber, To Yuen Tung, and Longevity Chamber. It is a place of serenity. Fung Loi Sin Yuen [Fun Loi Leung Yuen] sits in Pun Shan Chau and can be assessed from behind the hills in Pan Chung. Having passed To Yuen Tung and Wun Yiu, one walks further for about half an hour to arrive there. The site, built in the style of ancient palace, is truly exceptional.*²

The inscription at Yan Lo describes the landscape of Kam Shan:

*Its front draws forth the reach of Pat Sin Leng, its left views the ranges of Tai Mo Shan. Its right embraces the billows of Tolo Harbour, with Kam Shan as its pillow. Water from the Lam Tsuen waterfall flows ahead. The neighbours are followers of the Tao. It is the perfect site for contemplation and enlightenment.*³



Site Map of Buddhist and Taoist Institutions. Ng Ba Ling, *Sceneries and Cultures of the New Territories* (新界風光) (Hong Kong: Overseas Chinese Daily, 1960 1st ed., 1962 3rd ed).

Along with dramatic changes in the past thirty years, Tai Po has evolved from a small town in the countryside into urban space. Some of the worship sites have been renovated, such as Sing Kung Cho Tong, others have been relocated, such as To Yuen Tung. The old environment has long been gone. Meanwhile, some of the lectoriums, such as Lo Fung Academy, have gone through other developments. Our descriptions here memorialise their history, such that they will not be completely forgotten.

Fan Sin Temple of Wun Yiu: From God of the Trade to Local Protective Deity

1. The History of Fan Sin Temple in Wun Yiu

Workmen in Hong Kong worship gods of their own trade, including Lo Pan, Wah Kwong and Fan Sin. There are many gods for the pottery industry, such as Fan Lai ("Fan Li" in Putonghua), the Fire God and legendary Emperor Shun. The god of trade for Wun Yiu in Tai Po is Fan Sin.

Fan Sin was a god of trade for Xiatao Village in Wuhua County, Meizhou, Guangdong, and was brought to Hong Kong by the Ma family which originated there.⁴ Wuhua County is one of the major Hakka areas in Guangdong Province. The Mas of Wun Yiu in Tai Po could be traced to



Fan Sin Temple is located in Wun Yiu Village. Fan Sin is the patron deity of the ceramic industry. (Photography by Lo Wai Ling)

Changle in Meizhou, which is Wuhua in Meizhou today. Tai Po Wun Yiu was founded by the Mans and the Tses during the Ming Dynasty. After the Qianjie Campaign ended in Kangxi Reign, the territory was reinstated, but the Tses were already rooted in the Mainland and were unwilling to return to Hong Kong. Consequently, the Mans let the Mas take over all of Wun Yiu.

According to the inscription on Fan Sin Temple's name plaque, the temple was founded in Gengshu Year of the Qianlong Reign in the Qing Dynasty (1790). Yet, the Fan Sin religion had been introduced into Hong Kong long before that, and Fan Sin Temple in Wun Yiu served as testimony of the Ma family's arduous journey of settlement in Tai Po. The original Fan Sin Temple was not located where it is today, but on the hill next to the Wun Yiu Public School toilets. It used to be the mouth of one of the dragon kilns at Wun Yiu for convenient worship by the bowl craftsmen. The altar is believed to have been built with clay initially and was replaced with a brick altar later in time. Judging from its location, the original Fan Sin Temple could not have been big.

After its founding in the Qianlong Reign, Fan Sin Temple has undergone a number of renovations. The known renovations were carried out in the 7th year of the Tongzhi

Reign (1868), the 23rd year of the Guangxu Reign (1897), the 14th year of the Republican Period (1925), 1964, 1976 and 2000. On average, a renovation took place once every twenty years. There is not enough evidence to show during which of these renovations Fan Sin Temple was moved to its current location. However, the couplets written in the 7th year of the Tongzhi Reign reads, "The Temple moved clouds/ The pines no longer the same", suggesting that relocation happened in 1868.

The oldest inscription in Fan Sin Temple, dated the 23rd year of the Guangxu Reign (1897), records the following:

In the 23rd year of the Guangxu Reign, Fan Sin Temple, Kwan Tai Temple and the God of the Earth Temple were renovated. Statues of Kwan Tai and the God of the Earth were made.⁵

The fact that the three temples were renovated at the same time and memorialised in the same inscription shows that Fan Sin Temple could well have been built at the same location as Kwan Tai Temple and the God of the Earth Temple. The structure could have been two-hall-three-bay, with the three gods served independently in the three bays. Fan Sin, meanwhile, was the primary deity. From the inscription, we can also tell that the statues of Kwan Tai and the God of the Earth were not "re-sculpted", that is, the two gods did not have statues before the renovation. They could have been worshipped on an altar, or a small shrine. The Fan Sin Temple renovation provided opportunity for the two gods to be sculpted and placed within a temple chamber. It was quite common to worship multiple gods in local worship, but there was clearly a hierarchy among the three gods. Fan Sin was the primary deity in the temple, as shown in the inscription from the Guangxu Reign.

As time progressed, the pottery trade of Wun Yiu gradually declined. By the 1930s, it was no longer appropriate to place the Kwan Tai Temple (renamed Mo Tai Temple at the time) and the God of the Earth Temple inside Fan Sin Temple. Around 1936, the villagers of Wun Yiu renewed the old God of the Earth Temple, which had been



left in ruins for years, and moved Mo Tai Temple and the God of the Earth Temple there under the same structure. The new temple was named Mo Tai Temple.

When the kilns finally ceased operation, the Fan Sin religion took on a new role. Fan Sin evolved from a god of trade to a god for the clan, and eventually became the protector of the region. The end of the pottery business was a severe blow to the Wun Yiu villagers, but they soon adapted to a new life of farming. Religious services were just as important for agricultural life as they were for the pottery trade. Furthermore, as the Wun Yiu villagers had always worshipped Fan Sin, they naturally continued their worship for fine weather and well-being of humans and livestock. The villagers celebrated Fan Sin's birthday, and Fan Sin's new role as protector of the area became part of their daily lives. During the Japanese Occupation in the 1940s, looters plagued the Wun Yiu area, almost destroying the villages and halting religious life. At Fan Sin's birthday in 1958, villages in Wun Yiu celebrated as the economy slightly revived. Fan Sin Temple was managed by the ten villages in Wun Yiu: Lai Chi Shan, To Yuen Tung, Sheung Wun Yiu, Ha Wun Yiu, Cheung Uk Tei, San Uk Ka, Pun Shan Chau, Yuen Dun Ha, Yin Ngam, and Da Tit Yan. In times of festivity, the ten villages would all contribute funds for celebration. In 1964, Fan Sin Temple was renovated for the first time after the War. The statues were painted in gold again and both the interior and exterior of the structure were redecorated. The villagers painted two murals under the eaves of the main gate – the first one depicting Wong Shiu Chi Secondary School in Tai Po Market and the second one showing Yin Ngam on the hills behind Wun Yiu. The two mural paintings signify that the area from Wong Shiu Chi Secondary School to Yin Ngam belongs to Wun Yiu, all protected by Fan Sin.

Today, Fan Sin Temple is a declared monument protected by Hong Kong's heritage laws. The renovation in 2000 was sponsored by the Hong Kong SAR Government. After the renovation, villages of Wun Yiu continued to manage the temple. Not only is Fan Sin Temple a frequented site of local worship, but it also provides a public venue for

the villagers. It serves as the office for the Wun Yiu Village Committee, where villagers discuss village affairs and receive guests.

2. Reasons for Frequent Worship at Wun Yiu's Fan Sin Temple

Besides the long history it shares with the people of Wun Yiu, Fan Sin Temple was popular also because the faith had been deeply rooted in the villagers' daily lives. The life of a Wun Yiu villager was inexplicably intertwined with Fan Sin from the very beginning – some villagers offered their infants for Fan Sin's protection and blessings when they were just one month old. They would even name their children with the characters "fan" or "xian" ("sin" in Cantonese) to proclaim their faith. Especially after the 1950s, when Wun Yiu Public School was built next to Fan Sin Temple, parents would worship Fan Sin every day.

Of course, the temple was frequented also because of Fan Sin's divine powers. Fortune sticks were available for fortune telling in the temple, but if the worshipper wished to learn more about their fortune, the god had to be specially invited in a ritual ceremony. From its founding until the 1980s, there had been a shen-t'ung (spirit medium) in Fan Sin Temple. The shen-t'ung was very powerful, especially when it came to selecting auspicious dates for special occasions. News of the shen-t'ung spread to the rest of Hong Kong, and even people from abroad visited the temple.



2001 New Year Blessing Ceremony at Man Tak Yuen (Provided by Yip Tung)



The last shen-t'ung of Fan Sin Temple was Chi Kwai Mau, also known as Chi Choi or Chi Sang Choi. The villagers respectfully called him Grandpa Chi. Chi's family has a tradition of serving worshippers – his grandfather Chi Tak Loi (also known as Chi Yau Wing) and his father Chi Tak Mau (also named Chi Sau) were also shen-t'ungs. As recorded in the inscriptions, Chi Yau Wing made a donation to the God of the Earth Temple in the 9th year of the Daoguang Reign (1829), while Chi Tak Mau gave money for Fan Sin Temple's renovation in the 23rd year of the Guangxu Reign (1897). The Chis have lived in Wun Yiu for many generations.⁶

When Chi Kwai Mau was the shen-t'ung at Fan Sin Temple, date selection service was in the highest demand. People needed to select auspicious dates for wedding and construction, which became frequent as the economy recovered after the war. Fan Sin Temple became well known for the auspicious dates it selected for worshippers. The shen-t'ung had to follow strict procedures for the date selection ritual and the temple keeper would assist him when Fan Sin was invited. Chi Kwai Mau would start the ritual by burning incense and then invite Fan Sin to possess him. When Fan Sin had descended, the shen-t'ung would appear in front of the worship station and sit on a chair facing the door of the temple. Next the shen-t'ung would ask the worshipper for what purpose the dates were requested. After some calculations, a date and time would be chosen along with the best compass direction, and the information would be recorded by the temple keeper. When the task was complete, the shen-t'ung would tap his feet lightly and the temple keeper would know that Fan Sin had left. The shen-t'ung, supported by the temple keeper, would soon return to his senses and the ritual would be over.

Today Fan Sin Temple still keeps a script seal in a box in front of the Fan Sin Statue. The seal was used for date selection, and is engraved with the words, "commanded by Fan Sin, blessings are kept in this hall and the evil is driven out." The temple keeper would write the opportune date

and time for the start of construction work on a piece of red paper and chop the paper with the seal. The paper, known as "start note", would be displayed at the construction site to notify workmen of the date and time of construction kick-off. More importantly, it was intended to show them the date and time for the start of construction had been selected by Fan Sin, so that the project would go smoothly and their safety would be guaranteed. The start note would be displayed at the construction site until the end of the project. Afterwards, a simple ceremony would be conducted and the note would be burned.

Apart from date selection, villagers also visited Fan Sin Temple for medical service. As medical resources were scarce in the past, the temples offered a medical consultancy service, a form of traditional Chinese medicine. Chi Kwai Mau was responsible for writing "Well Being" ("Pingan") Scripts, interpreting fortune sticks, reading Feng Shui and driving out evil spirits. From the 1960s to 1980s, the villages, such as Pan Chung Village, would ask the shen-t'ung to select dates for their festive celebrations.⁷ During Fan Sin's Birthday, Chi would also preside over big and small ceremonies and rituals. Fan Sin Temple was the venue of exchange between the divine and human, and it injected religion into the villagers' lives.

3. Fan Sin Temple within the Wun Yiu Public School Campus

It is Chinese tradition to build schools next to temples, and such practice has been common in Hong Kong. For example, Man Mo Temple in Sheung Wan built Man Mo Free School to the right of the temple, while Pak Tai Temple in Wan Chai founded a free school to the right of the temple. Missionaries who came to China to preach also followed this practice. Wun Yiu Public School was registered in 1949 and one of its main features was that there was a temple inside the campus. The school building stood next to Fan Sin Temple.

Since Fan Sin Temple was the villager's communal premises and the school was built with funds raised by the villagers, Wun Yiu Public School was also a form of public space. Consequently when the school underwent expansion and needed to utilise the structure of Fan Sin Temple, the villagers did not object to the proposal at all. After the school's founding, the population in Wun Yiu grew and the number of students increased. Wun Yiu Public School began using Fan Sin Temple's structure and established the head teacher's office, tuck shop and staff kitchen there. In this way, Fan Sin Temple played its traditional role under new conditions.

Thus the school was conveniently located next to Fan Sin Temple. Although the school did not have any scheduled worship service and the students were never required to believe in Fan Sin, the temple inside the campus had always been open to the public. Villagers frequented the temple for worship. Scenes of the temple keeper offering alms and the outsiders seeking guidance through the shen-t'ung inevitably exerted influence on the students' religious belief. According to the students, shen-t'ung Grandpa Chi (Chi Kwai Mau) did not live in the temple at the time. When worshippers visited the temple and asked for him it was usually the students who went and fetched him. At first they would run to him to pass on the message; later they used the telephone. Grandpa Chi's rituals usually drew a crowd of students and many of them can still describe the scene vividly today. Due to frequent contact with Fan Sin, students were excited about Fan Sin's birthday celebrations, just like any other villager of Wun Yiu. The festival was also a school holiday. During the three nights and four days, the school would become the stage for celebratory performances, or even accommodation for the worshippers. The students helped their parents to prepare for the festival. Meanwhile, Fan Sin Temple also exerted religious influence on the teachers: as it was located inside the school premises, the teachers paid their respects to Fan Sin. Many teachers would offer burning incense in the temple before the day ended to express their gratitude to Fan Sin.



Fan Sin Festival (Photography by Ngai Ting Ming)



Fan Sin deity image (Photography by Ngai Ting Ming)



On the left of the photo is the last shen-t'ung of Fan Sin Temple, Chi Kwai Mau. (Provided by Ma Lai Sim)



Taoist Priests of Man Tak Chi Sin She performed rituals in the 2001 Fan Sin Festival. (Provided by Ma Lai Sim)

4. Fan Sin's Birthday: Annual Festivity

Fan Sin's birthday is a major festival in Wun Yiu. Since Fan Sin was originally a god of trade, the early festivities celebrating Fan Sin's birthday could have included trade-specific rituals and were different from other similar festivities. Unfortunately, there is not enough documentary evidence to support this hypothesis.

Existing records on the festivities of Fan Sin's birthday show that they were closer to those celebrating a god of protection for the region. Long before the festival, the organisers of the celebrations would collect donations from every family in Wun Yiu. Villagers today can still remember the puppet show from Longjiang, and also performances by local puppet troupes. During the festival, all staff stayed in the old Wun Yiu workmen dormitory. Interestingly, the puppet shows were not always performed in the Hakka dialect. The shows were staged yearly until the Japanese invasion of Hong Kong.

Apart from the tradition of puppet shows, the pre-War festivities also included a parade. The Fan Sin Statue would be taken by an entourage on patrol all across the Wun Yiu area, and Fan Sin would receive good wishes from the villagers. This was a solemn and elaborate event, and, indeed, one of the climaxes of the festivities. During the parade, people would welcome Fan Sin with exuberance and firecrackers. Another climax of the festival was when the shen-t'ung delivered his dagger bed (dagger sedan) performance. Fan Sin would be invited to descend on the shen-t'ung, who would be shown around in the parade sitting on the sharp tips of a dagger sedan to demonstrate the power of Fan Sin.

There was also the floating lantern ritual to symbolically relieve humans and animals from suffering. The ceremony, presided over by the shen-t'ung, was usually held along the river at sunset. Sometimes the animal release ritual would be held at the same time, in which captive birds, fish or tortoises would be released into nature. Meanwhile, the floating lanterns were thick paper boats with lit candles,



and they were released into the river after the ceremony. It was believed that, as the lanterns floated downstream, lone spirits would be guided to the land of pure happiness. The practice was considered a noble deed.

After the war, the annual celebrations lost their splendour. In 1958, the villages held the first post-war celebration, but there was no dagger sedan performance and other acrobatic shows. There was no parade and floating lantern ritual either. The festivities included a stage performance troupe and dragon and lion dances, but the genre of the performance was changed. Since the organisers were not able to invite puppet performers, the first show offering thanks to Fan Sin after the War was a Cantonese opera. In this way, Cantonese opera replaced the puppet show as the "new post-war tradition". As the economy continued to grow, the performance troupes invited by Wun Yiu were increasingly famous. Many well-known entertainers brought laughter and artistic enjoyment to the villages and their god Fan Sin. Such celebrative activities continued until 1988. Japanese scholar Tanaka Issei observed and documented birthday celebrations for Fan Sin from 1982 to 1985.⁸

According to a 2007 field study, the birthday celebrations now only take place in the morning of the 16th day of the 5th lunar month. On that day, villagers of Wun Yiu would come to Fan Sin Temple with alms and worship their god. The offerings include roasted pig, fresh fruit, pastries and rice dumplings (because it was around Dragon Boat Festival). According to the villagers, the practice of serving rice dumplings as alms is a century-old tradition in Wun Yiu. Rice dumplings are eaten in other places once a year, but they are eaten in Wun Yiu twice yearly. As noon approaches, the manager of Fan Sin Temple would hold a simple ceremony and firecrackers would be set off. The villagers would then picnic in the open area in front of the temple, and the birthday celebrations end.

To Yuen Tung: An Early Hall of the Sin Tin Tao

To Yuen Tung is, at the same time, the name of a village and a place. Coupled with Mo Lo Tam, To Yuen Tung

is a Taoist worship site and tourist attraction.⁹ Indeed, this area hosts many other religious establishments, such as Shui Yuet Temple, To Yuen Tung and Lo Fung Academy (more on Lo Fung Academy below). The elders of the area point out that Shui Yuet Temple was built before To Yuen Tung. Shui Yuet Temple is Wun Yiu's Kwun Yum (Guanyin) temple, while To Yuen Tung is a hall of the Sin Tin Tao sect which worships the Bodhisattva Maitreya. Also worshipped there were the Queen Mother (Wangmu), Kwun Yum and Zhang Zhidong. According to records, To Yuen Tung contributed to the renovations of Fan Sin Temple in 1964 and 1976. Lo Fung Academy, meanwhile, contributed to the 1976 Fan Sin Gong renovation.¹⁰

To Yuen Tung, established by Master Tin Siu Tsuen, is a hall and retreat of the Sin Tin Tao sect. Master Tin had successively established Wutong Xiandong in Shenzhen, Qinglian Guan in Yonggeng Tang, Guangzhou, Siu Ha Sin Yuen in the Kwun Yum Temple in Mong Kok, Kowloon, and To Yuen Tung in Tai Po. The couplet on the doorframe of To Yuen Tung, written in the 6th year of the Republican Period (1916), is very meaningful. It describes Master Tin's journey to Hong Kong for the spread of Taoism:

*The peaches and pears are traced to their origins, the
flowers flow along the streams;
Phoenix trees are planted and the cave is explored, the
broken branches will not stop the spread of Taoism.¹¹*

Master Tin Siu Tsuen admired the embrace of mountains and waters around the site, and named the hall To Yuen Tung ("Taoyuan Dong" in Putonghua, meaning the paradise cave). Master Wan Cheong Wo, the head of To Yuen Tung, recalls that the site was more than 10,000 square feet at the time of founding with multiple buildings, including Shui Yuet Temple and Siu Tsuen "Meditation Hall". They were the perfect places for monks to do their contemplation. Life was hard then and the land near the site was used to plant grain. The rice was then exchanged for vegetables and fruit with Chong Ha Ching She in Fanling, and the two Taoist sites were happy to support each other.¹² Couplets are preserved today at Chong Ha Ching She, one of which



was presented by Tin Siu Tsuen, Ho Ming Tat and Wun Yiu villagers Ma Tao Lung and Ma Yiu Ting. Ma Yiu Ting was one of the two advocates for Fan Sin Temple's renovation in 1925, while Ma Tao Lung contributed the largest sum of money to that renovation.¹³ The *New Territories Overview* (新界概覽) records:

There is indeed "To Yuen Tung" building, which should be a contemporary building. A plaque with the words "To Yuen Tung" is hung over the main gate, and the couplet on the sides read, "The peaches and pears are traced to their origins, the flowers flow along the streams;/ Phoenix trees are planted and the cave is explored, the broken branches will not stop the spread of Taoism." The couplet is dated on an autumn day in the sixth year of the Republican Period. Another couplet is found inside the building: "No worldly affairs are known here/ Fabled land of the gods this is". There are structures on both sides of the cave – Siu Village Meditation Hall on the left and Longevity Chamber and Shui Yuet Temple on the right. A few women over the age of fifty live in the cave, and they farm for a living.¹⁴

The villagers of Wun Yiu also worshipped at To Yuen Tung. Ma Yee Mui was the abbess of Shui Yuet Temple and maintained a close relationship with followers of the Sin Tin Tao Sect at To Yuen Tung. In fact, Ma herself eventually became a follower. In 1947, Ma Yuk Yin was promoted to the "rank" of a deaconry in Sin Tin Tao Sect. The master of the ceremony was Tsang Tao Kwong, who later became the head of the Sin Tin Tao sect.

In the 1980s, the Hong Kong Government re-claimed To Yuen Tung and the land nearby to develop Tai Po. In 1987, To Yuen Tung was demolished and relocated to its current address at 42 Shan Tong Village. Shui Yuet Temple was moved to 27 Shan Tong Village. The Kwun Yum Statue inside the temple today is a relic of older times.



Photograph of To Yuen Tung's Taoist priests taken in the 1970s. The stone plaque was dated 1917; on the right upper corner is a photograph of the founder, Master Tin Siu Tsuen. (Provided by To Yuen Tung)



A building complex in Wun Yiu's To Yuen Tung. Longevity Chamber is on the right. Many devotees visit To Yuen Tung during its festival. (Provided by To Yuen Tung)



To Yuen Tung (Photography by Ngai Ting Ming)



Besides To Yuen Tung, the Sin Tin Tao sect also maintained other sites in Tai Po – Kun To Tong and Ling Kuk Yuen had been relocated to Tai Po from other areas. Ling Kuk Yuen, located in Pan Chung Village of Tai Po, was originally built next to Tsang Tai Uk in Shatin's Shan Ha Wai. At the time it was called Jui Yin Ching She. Today a couplet dated to 1920 is well preserved in Ling Kuk Yuen. It tells of the origin of the site, Cangxia Dong in Qingyuan. Ling Kuk Yuen Kindergarten was one of the temple's community involvements. Meanwhile, Ling Kuk Yuen is the only Sin Tin Tao temple in Hong Kong worshipping the three Zhangliuyu earth gods of the Tang Dynasty, tree gods that are popular in Guangzhou, Panyu and Huaxian. Cangxia Dong in Qingyuan was built in the 2nd year of the Tongzhi Reign (1863) to serve the three earth gods. The altar at Ling Kuk Yuen bore the wording, "Kuang Fu Zheng Fa" (meaning "upholding righteousness"), and had the couplet, "The Great Tao shows selfless virtues./ The temple is well managed and bestows endless blessings." The first line of the couplet shows the special attribute of the three deities as earth gods. Their birthday is on the 24th day of the 6th lunar month.¹⁵ After the War, the Ling Kuk Yuen began serving the Three Treasures (Sanbao); and because Jat Min Chuen was being built in Shatin, the temple was relocated to Pan Chung Village in Tai Po. Today Ling Kuk Yuen is a retreat that is not open to the public.

Sing Kung Cho Tong: Temple Originating from Guangzhou for the Worship of Master Guangcheng

Sing Kung Cho Tong is located on Ting Kok Road in Tai Po. The committee to found the temple was formed in 1929 in Tai Hang Village's Kwong Ming Toi. The present site in Tai Po was purchased in 1931, and has an area over 30,000 square feet. In 1932 the site was registered with the Government and received the legal status of a limited company as well as special permission to add the words "limited company" after its name. Master Guangcheng is worshipped in the structure in the front, while the Three Pure Ones (Sanqing) are worshipped in the structure at the back. Master Guangcheng is believed to be a mythical god during the period of the legendary Huangdi, or the Yellow Emperor.

He lived in a stone cave in Kongdong Mountain, and taught the Yellow Emperor scholarship and medicine. The name of the temple, "Sing Kung" ("Shenggong" in Putonghua), alludes to the saying "a reflective mind and candid personality, with willpower to put thought into practice." The couplet at the front gate reads:

*Enter these doors to reflect with honesty and virtue.
Lines of masters practise the Tao for endless blessed deeds.*

Sing Kung Cho Tong in Hong Kong originated from Shenggong Caotang ("Sing Kung Cho Tong" in Cantonese) of Guangzhou that was established in 1894. It was originally built in Dezheng Street in Guangzhou (the intersection between Dezheng Bei Road and Yuxi Er Road today), behind Panyu County Office to the west. For many years, the establishment had provided religious and community services, including medical consultation, medication, coffins, burial services, food, vaccination and care for widows. Every year it distributed rice twice and had therefore earned a good reputation. Next to Shenggong Caotang, Shenghe Tang provided medication to the people who had received their diagnosis and prescription at the temple. In 1953, Shenggong Caotang ceased operation.¹⁶ According to records of the temple, Shenggong Caotang was built during the Jiawu rodent plague of the late Qing Dynasty (1894). Many people were struck by the epidemic, and Master Guangcheng, moved by the people's suffering, sent the phoenix to the mortal world to quell the plague and spread the recipe for the cure. In their gratitude, the Guangzhou people founded Shenggong Caotang to worship the Master.

In the 1920s, a number of Hong Kong merchants who travelled frequently between Hong Kong and Guangzhou established Sing Kung Cho Tong in Tai Po to pass on the spirit of Shenggong Caotang in Guangzhou. Construction work was completed in 1932 and the opening ceremony was held three years later:

The building of Guangcheng Temple had been planned for many years. On the first day of the third



lunar month in 1920, we purchased two buildings in Kwong Ming Toi in Tai Hang Village, Hong Kong, for the worship of Master Guangcheng. It was established for the convenience of those Hong Kong people who could not afford the time to travel abroad for worship. The buildings were also where the establishment of Sing Kung Cho Tong was planned.The construction of the temple had not been smooth. In 1932, most of the main hall and the front building were completed and it was decided that we would move in on the 15th day of the 12th lunar month of that year.In 1934, on the first day of the eleventh lunar month, the grand opening ceremony took place. The spirit tablets of the Three Pure Ones were worshipped on the third floor of the back building, while the main hall housed the bronze statue of Master Guangcheng.¹⁷ On the left of the statue, the tablets of Onzhen and the Flying Phoenix are worshipped. Kai Ling Tong on the ground floor of the back building hosted the tablets of people who had contributed to the founding of the temple. The consecration ceremony was also held.¹⁸

In *A Brief Record of Hong Kong's Guangcheng Temple* (港堂廣成宮事略), edited by Hong Kong Sing Kung Cho Tong and published in 1961, the thirty years of history since the founding of the temple is recorded in much detail. The foreword states that Sing Kung Cho Tong follows the



The interior of Guangcheng Temple (Photography by Sing Kung Cho Tung)



The original deity image of the Guangcheng Temple before renovation. Guangcheng was holding a ruyi (如意). (Provided by Sing Kung Cho Tung)



The Sing Kung Cho Tong before renovation. (Provided by Sing Kung Cho Tung)



The original stone plaque of the Guangcheng Temple. (Provided by Sing Kung Cho Tung)



established tradition of Shenggong Caotang in Guangzhou and is thus different from other Taoist temples:

The development of Sing Kung Cho Tong in Hong Kong begins in 1928, with strict adherence to the teachings in Records of Shenggong. Besides differences arising from geographical factors, Sing Kung Cho Tong in Hong Kong holds high regard for the practice of Shenggong Caotang in Guangzhou and follows it closely.It is important to note that Cho Tong does not accept donations from the outside, and does not participate in worldly affairs. The only mission is to follow the principles of virtue, beneficence and charity. Our work pales in comparison with the noble deeds of our great ancestors Yao and Shun. We dare not call our establishment shantang (charity) but humbly name it caotang ("cho tong" in Cantonese; "cao" means grass). Such is the belief of Shenggong Caotang in Guangzhou and we in Hong Kong practise the same.¹⁹

According to oral accounts by villagers in Tai Po, during the Japanese occupation, the Japanese army seized Sing Kung Cho Tong and used it as a centre of administration for the neighbouring areas:

During the winter of 1941, this hall was occupied by the Japanese army. After the Japanese surrendered in 1945, it was occupied by a certain military authority.The only relic untouched by the war was the marble tablet of the Three Pure Ones. On the third day of the sixth lunar month in 1950, a group of us congregated in the main hall and re-instated the Three Pure Ones tablet for worship. Beginning in the winter of 1950, we restored each of the halls with funds raised from rental leases. In 1955 we received permission to repaint the portrait of Master Guangcheng, and on the first day of the third lunar month, the portrait was worshipped in the main hall. On the third day of the sixth lunar month of the same year, we moved the Three Pure Ones tablet

respectfully and the chamber on the third floor was restored. The first phase of restoration was, thus, complete.²⁰

According to *Recent Records of Shenggong* (省躬近錄), in the eighty years since its establishment, Shenggong Caotang has mainly provided medical diagnostic service to believers with guidance from Master Guangcheng. The provision of medication was a supplementary service. When Sing Kung Cho Tong was established in Hong Kong, medical diagnosis and medication were provided for free. At the time, the temple had 150 medical prescription slips. If the worshippers sought healing with a devoted heart, they would receive a prescription, and could get medication from a designated Chinese pharmacy in Tai Po. Many rare and difficult illnesses could be healed. In addition, Sing Kung Cho Tong produced pills and tablets for different purposes based on divine prescriptions and distributed them to worshippers. Entering the 1990s, Sing Kung Cho Tong's medical services further developed. A pharmacy department was established in 1991 to manage the business. Currently, there is one clinic each of Chinese and western medicine on Ting Kok Road serving the community. Fees are very low and the services are well received by the residents of Tai Po.

Sing Kung Cho Tong has a three-hall layout. The exterior of the building is simple yet elegant, while the interiors are refreshingly and beautifully decorated. Situated in such an environment, one is naturally inclined to share a sense of serenity and renewal, as the couplet describes aptly:

*Here worldly troubles are washed away,
Within this gate respect stands forever.*

To assist development of the Tai Po district, Sing Kung Cho Tong donated land from its back garden for the construction of residential buildings. It also went through demolition and reconstruction due to its age. In order to preserve the original appearance, the principle of reconstruction was to build new structures that resemble the old. The reconstruction process lasted for more than three



years, and the temple was reopened in spring of 1990. The main structure is Guangcheng Temple where the Master is worshipped. Its couplet reads, "In my palms lie heaven and earth./ Tigers and dragons always by my side." On the two sides of the Master, Zhentan God (a tree god, whose birthday is celebrated on the 18th day of the 12th lunar month) and Chu God (the red bird, whose birthday is celebrated on the 17th day of the 6th lunar month) are worshipped.²¹ The birthday of Master Guangcheng is celebrated the sixth day of the sixth lunar month. All disciples of the temple would meet for the celebration activities. The Hall of the Three Pure Ones is found on the second floor of the third hall, where the Three Pure Ones are worshipped. The statues are lively with a peaceful demeanour. Yu Yee Tang is located behind Guangcheng Temple to the right. It has spirit-calligraphy on the wall with a profound meaning. Inspired by Master Guangcheng, one of the couplets says, "Among the five blessings of life, longevity comes first./ Without life, wealth and status are futile." The other reads, "The cranes and phoenixes descend into the human world./ They write encouragements for the heart's benefit." However, the fu-chi (spirit writing) has ceased since 1985. In the hall, there is a group photo of Shenggong Caotang's 30th anniversary celebrations in 1924. This precious photograph was taken in front of the Hall of the Three Pure Ones in Shenggong Caotang in Guangzhou.


Even though Sing Kung Cho Tong is popular in the community, it has always maintained a low profile. The running costs are contributed by disciples voluntarily, and it receives no contribution from outsiders. However, as the times change, there have been some adjustments in its policies. For example, before 1969, Sing Kung Cho Tong would only recruit disciples of the Qian (male), but later it also accepted disciples of the Kun (female). Furthermore, the site has been open to visitors after its reconstruction, although there is still no donation box inside the temple. In fact, the policy of not accepting outside donations is prominently displayed on the premises. Sing Kung Cho Tong has played an active role in social and community services; for example, when a school or a hospital is in need of funds, it will contribute.²²

Sung Sum To Tak Tan: Laozi Temple Originated from Chaozhou

Sung Sum To Tak Tan (Tsun Sum Virtue Association Co. Ltd), founded by Cheung Sin Tin of Chaoyang in 1948, is located in Tsung Tsai Yuen of Tai Po Kau Village. Taoist worship sites established by the people of Chaozhou are usually named with the character "kok" ("ge" in Putonghua), such as Yuk Ha Kok, Yuen Ching Kok, Tsz Wan Kok, etc. In Hong Kong, a number of Taoist temples have been established by the people of Chaozhou to worship the Taoist Lord Laozi, including Yuen Doh Sin Koon, originally established in 1951 in Sai Wan and later moved to Chai Wan.²³ Its centre hall is devoted to the worship of Laozi. Another example is Tsz Wan Kok, located in Tsz Wan Shan. Sung Sum To Tak Tan in Tai Po is, meanwhile, one of the earliest Taoist temples in Hong Kong. With its main hall dedicated to the worship of Laozi, Sung Sum To Tak Tan is also known as Laozi Temple. On the two sides of Laozi sit lesser deities Tianhe and Tiande. There is a couplet that reads, "Tianhe is entrusted with the mission of saving the world./ Tiande sees the Jade Emperor carrying books."

In 1974, Sung Sum To Tak Tan applied for the status of a limited company, and printed the *Special Commemorative Issue for the Thirtieth Anniversary of Sung Sum To Tak Tan and the Reconstruction of the Ancient Temple* (崇心通德壇卅周年暨古廟重建紀念特刊).²⁴ Mak King Wah, village chief of Tai Po Kau Village, recorded its establishment, "Tai Po Sung Sum To Tak Tan was established in 1948 in Tai Po Kau Village. It has already been thirty years since its founding. The grand altar is for the worship of Taoist founder Laozi, and is frequented by devout worshippers." According to the Temple Affairs Report by Cheng Chung Tsang, manager of the first executive committee of Sung Sum To Tak Tan and chairman of the second executive committee, the worship site has had the following development in its expansion:

In the early years, the rites and rituals for worshipping Lord Laozi were simple because they had been intended for individual worship at home. With efforts



by Cheung Sin Tin to build the temple's reputation, medical and burial services were provided to the community. The temple developed further with blessings by Lord Laozi. More followers subscribed to the faith and many frequented the temple daily. In 1974, temple officials submitted an application to the authority for "limited company" status. ...This temple worships Lord Laozi with the mission: to train a follower's heart in the Tao, to benefit the heart, to discipline one's way by the Tao, and to treat others with courtesy.²⁵

Cheung Sin Tin, the permanent master of the temple, explained the meaning behind the temple's name:

*This temple worships the saintly Lord Laozi. We follow his teachings on the way of life and his beliefs in life, wisdom, culture and philosophy. We follow through in the principles of the Tao. Since the founding of this temple, we have promoted Lord Laozi's ideal virtues for thirty years. The Tao came from lives and lives came from the Origin – thus the virtues of the Tao.*²⁶

After Cheung Sin Tin passed away in 2005, the temple has been managed by his son. According to his son, Cheung Sin Tin came to Hong Kong in 1930. He was "instructed" by Lord Laozi to come to Hong Kong and build a temple. He initially lived in Kowloon Tsai and moved to Tai Po in 1950. At first, he started a worship facility at home, and only registered it as a limited company later. Sung Sam To Tak Tan moved to its current address in Tsung Tsai Yuen in 1991. Cheung Sin Tin was also one of the original incorporators of the Tai Po Chiu Chow (Chaozhou) Native Association Limited, as well as the fund collector in Tai Po Kau for the Yu Lan Festival Performance.²⁷ Meanwhile, major events at Sung Sam To Tak Tan include celebrations for Lord Laozi's birthday of the 15th day of the 2nd lunar month, Yu Lan Festival Fair on the 10th day of the 2nd lunar month and the Grand Worship at the end of each lunar year.²⁸

Yan Lo: The Worship of Lu Tsu and Five Religions

There are a number of Taoist and Buddhist temples in Kam Shan, including Tai Kwong Yuen, Pun Chun Yuen and Yan Lo.

Yan Lo is located in Kam Shan Village. According to the stone plaque at the main gate, it was founded in the summer of 1951, and the current structure was renovated in 1968. In 1931, Taoist monks, including Yau Kok Man, had already established Yan Lo in D'Aguilar Street in Central. Yan Lo in Kam Shan is, in fact, the "Tai Po Site." Yau Kok Tak, also known as Ching Miu, is Yau Kok Man's son. He used to be a spirit medium, passing on divine messages at Yan Lo. However, there has not been any spirit writing at the hall in the past decade. Yau Man Tak wrote "Our Temple's Fifty Turbulent Years" and recorded the descent of Lu Tsu in a spirit calling session to endorse the founding of Yan Lo. Since 1930, Yan Lo has moved five times from its original address in Graham Street due to unaffordable rents. In 1961, the hall finally settled in its current address on the sixth floor of 20-22 D'Aguilar Street. Village gentry member Ng Chung Chiz assisted with the building of the Tai Po Site:

The Society began in 1930. The original site was in Graham Street, Central, inside Yau Kok Man's home. The society initially held informal social meetings until a guest came with the idea of spirit writing. At first it was done as a game without any particular purpose. In one coincidence, Lu Tsu descended with didactic messages. He said, "as it was an opportune meeting with all, why not set up a Taoist worship site for the benefit of the people? Clinics can be established to alleviate suffering in the world. Children can be taught to respect the elderly, and the moral standard of the times can be enhanced. Society will be blessed with your good work. First, You may dispel disasters and misfortune; Second, you may teach the Tao and learn the Zen." Consequently, friends and colleagues were invited to plan for a formal establishment. In 1931, on the 29th day of the 1st lunar month, Yan Lo was



established at 9 D'Aguilar Street with an altar. Yau Kok Man, also known as Ching Wai, was one of the founders. Other founding members were Yau Kok Cheung, also known as Ching Man, Yau Hin Tsak, also known as Ching Ming, Yau Man Tak, also known as Ching Miu, Au Wing Lin, also known as Yat Yiu and Chan Wun Cho, also known as Chung Geng (sixteen other members of the Qian and Kun Branches have been abridged).The Society made herbal medicine and printed the Tao scripture for distribution. The recipes for the medication were inspired by Lu Tsu. ...In 1932, the Society moved to Jervois Street. ...In 1951, Lu Tsu instructed the society to establish a site for meditation. As a result, a residential house at 80 Kam Shan Village in Tai Po was bought with land of 5,000 square feet. With the help of Ng Tsung Chi of Tsz Ha Yuen, the structure was rebuilt into a two-storey building. When members of the society did not have to work, the Tai Po site served as a place of contemplation and renewal.²⁹

Yan Lo's registered name is Yan Lo Buddhist Monastery Limited:

The Society has been named for its removal from worldly contests. ...Since its establishment, Lu Tzu has been the master of the Society. According to his teachings, the heavenly God is the creator of all living things on earth. Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism, Christianity and Islam are five religions that have originated from the heavenly God. The highest heavenly God sits at the main altar at Yan Lo, and, and the Society performs good deeds according to the teachings of the five religions. Therefore, the Society is named Yan Lo and Five Religions Society.³⁰

As to the construction of the Tai Po Site in Kam Shan, the *Founding of Yan Lo Buddhist Monastery in Tai Po* (隱廬佛社重修大埔堂落成記) records in detail:

Yan Lo's Tai Po Site is located in Kam Shan Village of Tai Po. From the foot of the mountain, one can reach Yan Lo within a hundred steps. The land, surrounded by the mountains, is 4,000 feet wide and has a very good landscape. Its front view of Pat Sin Leng, its left touches the ranges of Tai Mo Shan, its right embraces the billows of Tolo Harbour, with Kam Shan as its pillow. Water from the Lam Tsuen waterfall flows ahead. The neighbours are followers of the Tao. It is the perfect site for contemplation and enlightenment. Originally, this land had three tiled houses and rich vegetation including flowers, fruit, bamboo and green vegetables. It is an exceptional world of its own. Soon after the purchase of the land, a wooden building with three columns was built. A façade, a pavilion and a fountain were also built, while flowers and fruit trees decorated the premises. The structure was divided into Lu Tsu Chamber, Lung Wah Tong, Guest Chamber, and the office. The upper levels hosted Jade Emperor Chamber, Divine Guards Chamber (Hufa Dian), Kwun Yum Hall, Scripture Reading Hall and the common room. A giant bell had been made to hang on the balcony to remind worshippers of prayer time. In the other corner of the building, the kitchen was found. Furniture was sparse but special and tens of thousands had been spent on it. Fortunately, fellow members were generous to donate. On the 17th day of the 9th lunar month in 1951, Yan Lo was permanently founded in Tai Po. Time flies. It has been eighteen years since its founding. In 1968, Master Ching Wai would have celebrated his 100th birthday if he was alive, and the Tai Po Site was in need of renovation. A plan to rebuild the Tai Po Site was proposed and the second floor Scripture Reading Hall was named Ching Wai Memorial Hall. Lung Wah Tong was expanded to pay respect to the members' ancestors. Yi Ngam Hin and Chap Yin Ngam were added in the back to provide

socialising venues for our members. The stairways uphill were rebuilt as well, so that the land was best utilised.

9th lunar month of 1968

*Yan Lo Buddhist Monastery Expansion Committee
Members: Fok Chong Ming, Yau Chong Ming,
Cheng Kun Bing, Yau Chung Yan, Lo Kun Ying
Consultants: Yau Ching Miu, Au Yat Yiu, Yip Kun Sam³¹*

At Yan Lo, Lu Tsu (Lu Dongbin) is worshipped in the first floor Lu Tsu Chamber. Siu Yiu Kung (also known as the Jade Emperor Chamber) is found on the second floor and has the Tsz Hong Din and the Ching Wai Memorial Hall on its left and right respectively. The Lu Tsu portrait has been painted by disciple Yau Man Tak. Inside the Jade Emperor Chamber, a tablet is worshipped, paying respect to the founders of the five religions and other popular gods, including Confucius, Laozi, Sakyamuni, Jesus Christ, Mohammed, Lu Tsu, Guandi, Kwun Yum, Sun Wukong and the Ten Saintly Doctors. Every year on the 3rd day of the 1st lunar month, a noontime service is held at the Tai Po Site, while the founding anniversary of the Tai Po Site, the 17th day of the 9th lunar month, is usually celebrated with a feast. The couplet at the main gate shows:

*"Yan" – to take temporary leave from worldly affairs;
"Lo" – a place to meet and greet fellow good neighbours.*

At Lu Tsu Chamber, the couplet on the door was inspired by the great master himself:

*"Yan" – to retreat for enlightenment;
"Lo" – a place to learn truth and the Tao.*

At Yan Lo in D'Aguilar Street, Central, a framed mirror displays the membership rules of Yan Lo Buddhist Monastery, requesting believers "to follow the Tao in cultivating virtues, respect for the elderly, morality and loyalty with a strong heart and will, and to act and speak

with caution and discipline." In recent years, Yan Lo has printed Taoist and Buddhist scriptures for distribution.

Fung Loi Leung Yuen: Lectorium for the Worship of Lu Tsu and the Eight Immortals

Fung Loi Leung Yuen is located in Pun Shan Chau Village, Wun Yiu. The main god worshipped there is Lu Tsu (Lu Dongbin), thus the locals call Fun Loi Leung Yuen "Lu Tsu Temple." According to the elderly people who live in the lectorium to undertake and study, the site was purchased by the founding masters of Baoji Monastery of Lofu Shan for contemplative study. However, because the land was underdeveloped at that time, no immediate effort was made to establish it as a Taoist lectorium. Later, founder Yee Gu was instructed by Lu Tsu to operate clinics to benefit the world, and an altar was set up in Sham Shui Po. Her spirit healing was very effective, and she became well known to many. Many beneficiaries of her healing helped her fulfil the wish to found a temple. In the 1960s, Yee Gu purchased the hilly land in Pun Shan Chau for the construction of Fung Loi Leung Yuen, which was intended for contemplative study. It took a long period of time to build the structure and it was eventually inaugurated as a Taoist lectorium. The portrait of Lu Tsu, worshipped in the main hall, was painted in 1954, suggesting that Leung Yuen could have been officially founded in 1954.

The site was named "Fung Loi" ("Peng Lai" in Putonghua). Fung Loi is a mystical island in the sea of the East, a legendary place where the Eight Immortals reside. "Leung Yuen" ("Lang Yuan" in Putonghua) refers to the paradise sought after by the Dan Branch of Taoism. The site's name suggests that it is a blessed venue for meditation and contemplation. Leung Yuen is built on Fung Wong Shan, and all the structures have been built against the hills. Lu Tsu's portrait is venerated in the hall, and portraits of the Eight Immortals and Kwun Yum are served in front of it. The vessels of power of the Eight Immortals are depicted in the portraits: Li Tieguai with his gourd, Zhang Guolao with the fish-drum, Zhong Liquan with the palm leaf fan,



Lu Dongbin with his sword, He Xiangzi with her lotus, Lan Caihe with her flower basket, Han Xiangzi with his flute and Cao Guojiu with his "jianban" musical instrument. Lu Tsu Temple is a two-storey building, with the Kwan Tai Chamber on the ground floor and the Lung Fung Hall serving the Jade Emperor, Dragon Mother and Kwun Yum on the first floor.

Although Leung Yuen is largely a venue for contemplation, many villagers come to worship on the Jade Emperor's birthday on the 9th of the 1st lunar month, Lu Tsu's birthday on the 14th day of the 4th lunar month, and the Eight Immortals' birthday on the 8th day of the 8th lunar month. Villagers also visit the temple for guidance from Lu Tsu, with Yee Gu's assistance. In the past, Yee Gu would act as spirit medium when worshippers sought spiritual guidance. However, after Yee Gu passed away in the 1990s, spirit calling also ceased.

Man Tak Yuen: Lectorium with a Heavenly Landscape

Man Tak Yuen, located in Ng Tung Chai of Lam Tsuen in Tai Po, was established by Man Tak Chi Sin Seh. Man Tak Chi Sin Seh was founded in 1951 in Kowloon worshipping Lu Tsu. "Originating from the Chongxu Branch, it was founded by Zheng Chengchi, student of Ye Zongmao of Yingyuan Gong in Guanyin Shan, Guangzhou. The new branch is named Xin."³² During the mid 1970s, previous master, Cheung Chi Fan Justice of Peace (who was the chairman of the Village Committee of the Tai Po Alliance of Seven) discovered a piece of farmland next to the hills of Lam Tsuen. With encouragement and support from a group of Taoist monks, he built a Taoist lectorium site there with a heavenly landscape. After twenty years of development, Man Tak Yuen has established its current stature.

Man Tak Yuen is built by the hills with halls of grandeur. The gate tower bears the following couplet:

The falls and the streams, the rivers and the lives map the fairyland of phoenix trees.

The fog girdles the green mountaintop, with ancient caves at the South Mountain enveloping a heavenly otherworld.

According to the lectorium's manager, the mountain stream from the Ng Tung Chai waterfall girdles the valley in front of Man Tak Yuen. The mountains from afar show rocks in the shape of scripture scrolls. This would be the "map" that the couplet refers to, and confirms that the site for Man Tak Yuen is a piece of blessed land perfect for Taoist worship. Close to the valley lies Nam Shan (South Mountain), echoing the Lu Tsu's comment (passed on through spirit calling), "the ancient caves of Nam Shan are good for meditation." Having passed the gate tower, one enters the structures of Man Tak Yuen. Due to the site's geographic composition, the structures have not been built according to the traditional style of central axis construction. However, as the halls were built in layers along the valley, the structures higher up, such as Lu Tsu Hall and Shui Yuet Temple, look like they are chambers in heaven, and visitors enjoy the most spectacular view.

A few masters participated in the building of Man Tak Yuen, and it took twenty years to create the site we see today. Built along the hills, Man Tak Yuen radiates an aura of grandeur. Construction of Lu Tsu Hall was completed in 1977 and it was officially inaugurated the following year. Inside the hall, Lu Tsu is worshipped in the centre, while the masters Wang Chongyang and Qiu Changchun are worshipped on the two sides. The words on the plaque were written by Li Baiji in 1977. Jik Dak Pavilion was built in 1981, intended to be used to pray for rain on behalf of the people. At the time, Hong Kong experienced severe drought and Lu Tsu instructed the temple to build a pavilion to pray for rain. Later on, rain fell indeed and the pavilion was named Jik Dak (Good Deeds) Pavilion. From 1996 to 1998, Man Tak Yuen went through the second phase of construction. Structures built during the period include Shui Yuet Temple, Hang Tin Temple and Ng Fook Hall, which houses Jade Emperor Temple, and the Hall of the Three Pure Ones. Inside Hang Tin Temple, Kwan Tai, Man Cheong Tai (Wenchangdi) and Hung Ming (Zhuge Liang); there is



also Bodhisattva Ksitigarbha Chamber and a facility for worshipping the Buddha. The character "long (dragon)" on the wall outside Dau Mo Temple was inspired by Kwun Yum and written by Zhengzong Shuhuashe from Taiwan. It tells the story of the masters of Man Tak Yuen setting up a site in Taiwan and exchanging ideas and beliefs with believers in Taiwan.³³ Inside the Hall of the Three Pure Ones not only are the three deities, Jade Clarity (Yuqing), Highest Clarity (Shangqing) and Great Clarity (Taiqing) worshipped, but also eighteen other immortal saints. One of the characteristics of Man Tak Yuen is that, most of the portraits worshipped in the site, including those of the Three Pure Ones, Immortal Master Yu and Immortal Master Liu, were painted by Master

Choi Yiu, whose Taoist name is Sung King.³⁴ The bell tower was built in 1990 and is part of a four-section compound with Lu Tsu Hall and Wang Ling Hall.³⁵

The Taoists of Man Tak Chi Sin Seh are active participants in the temple rituals and activities in Tai Po. After Man Mo Temple in Fu Shin Street, Tai Po Market, became a declared monument, the Village Committee of the Alliance of Seven renovated the temple in 1985. Statues of Man Tai and Mo Tai were restored and the disciples of Man Tak Chi Sin Seh were responsible for their consecration ceremony.³⁶ In 2001, Man Tak Chi Sin Seh celebrated the 50th year anniversary of its founding. Besides a Chinese New Year prayer meeting held in Man Tak Yuen,³⁷ the masters also joined the prayer meeting and scripture chanting in Wun Yiu to celebrate Fan Sin's birthday that year.

According to the information provided by Man Tak Chi Sin Seh, the developmental stages of Man Tak Yuen are:

1951	Zheng Chengchi came to Hong Kong carrying with him the depiction of the master's image.
1952	Man Tak Chi Sin She was founded on Yin Chong Street.
1956	A permanent place on Canton Road is purchased.
1972	Man Tak Yuen was under planning to be built in Ng Tung Chai.
1977	Lu Tsu Hall in Man Tak Yuen was completed in 1978. An opening ceremony was held on the 27 th day of the 9 th lunar month.
1979	A branch temple was established on Tung Fat Square.
1981	Pavilion of Rain was built to pray for rains for Hong Kong. The pavilion was later renamed Jik Dak. A lotus pond for Kwun Yum was then built.
1982	The main temple in Po Hang Building on Dundas Street was under planning.
1990	The opening ceremony of the Bell Tower was held on the 12 th day of the 6 th lunar month. The façade at the main entry gate was expanded and an opening ceremony was held on the 8 th day of the 12 th lunar month.
1991	The Man Tak Institute on Taoist Studies was established in Shizilin, Simenting, Taiwan.
1996	Hall of the Three Pure Ones, Library of Scriptures, Ng Fook Hall and the Podium of the Eight Immortals.
1997	Shui Yuet Temple was completed and an opening ceremony was held on the 16 th day of the 8 th lunar month.
1998	Hang Tin Temple for Kwan Tai, Dau Mo Hall and the Façade of Keeping a Good Name were built.
2000	The Man Tak Yuen Management Committee was formed to take care of the institute's daily operation.

Lo Fung Academy: A Retreat of the Past

Lo Fung Academy was located in To Yuen Tung Village. Established by Chinese medical practitioner Chan Tsz Shek (1901-1981), it was also known as To Yuen Chin King. Chan Tsz Shek came to Hong Kong in 1949, and published a book on the study of spiritual practice. (He held the view that the study of spiritual practice had been known in the olden days as Taoist Practice in Immortality and was known in modern times as the Practice of Life and Soul). The planning and printing of this book was undertaken by Geng Seng Cho Tong, which was renamed as Lo Fung Gui Si Lam in 1952. In 1956, an altar was established to worship Taoist masters Lu Tsu and Zhang Tsu.³⁸ Believers of Lo Fung worshipped the masters of Nam Chung and venerated the San Yang Masters as "Master Li Boyang who spread and elevated Taoist virtues, Master Lu Chunyang who practised Taoist beneficence, and Master Zhang Ziyang who advocated Taoist ideology."³⁹ In 1960, the study was registered as Lo Fung Academy. In the following year over 10,000 square metres of land was purchased in To Yuen Tung Village for the construction of Lo Fung Spiritual Practice Institute. The land was located in the slightly elevated area northwest of a mountain stream.



Chan Tsz Shek, a native of Xinhui, Guangdong, was given the title "Taoist Master Lo Fung." He learned the Tao from Chen Kuigong of the Nam Chung Branch, calligraphy and painting from Gao Jianfu, and Chinese medicine from Chen Botan (one of Guangdong's four best known Chinese medical practitioners). According to the *Biography of Chan Tsz Shek* (陳子石先生小傳) by Tse Ting Sham, Chan's disciple:

Chan Tsz Shek's hometown was Xinhui of Guangdong. He started learning Chinese medicine at a young age, and he practised the Tao and art. His ancestor, Baisha, was famous for his meditation practices and philosophical ideas. Chan learned from his family members Chen Kuigong how to make medicinal pills. He came from a learned family. He lived in seclusion in Lo Fung, but he blessed his followers with teachings and benefited the world with virtues. He had published eight types of Taoist book.⁴⁰ Followers from near and far benefited from his teaching. He had also saved numerous people.

Chan Tsz Shek had also published the unscheduled journal *Lo Fung Spiritual Practice* (鑪峰修養刊) (the 1st to 21st issues were published from 1958 to 1963). He also authored *Taoist Rhymes* (嬾道吟) and *Lo Fung Couplet Collections* (鑪峰楹聯集).

Lo Fung Academy's lecture hall was located on Nathan Road in Kowloon. The To Yuen Chin King site in Tai Po's To Yuen Tung Village was a retreat. Entering the retreat's small entry gate, the façade bearing the plaque "To Yuen Chin King" had the couplet, "Inside 'Lo' ('Lu' in Putonghua) the Tao is hidden,/ Outside 'Fung' ('Feng' in Putonghua) a blessed land is concealed." Inside the main gate, the front of the façade showed the words "Lo Fung" written by Yu Yau Yam, while the words "Sing Dei" ("Shengdi" in Putonghua, meaning "the Holy Land") was written by Kwok Ting Hung in 1965. Going further, one would come upon San Yang Temple worshipping Li Boyang, Lu Chunyang and Zhang

Ziyang. The three holy statues were sculpted in marble. The plaque outside the gate read, "One Vein under Nam Chung," and had the couplet, "The San Yang Masters are worshipped in 'Lo,'/ The Eight Immortals are Venerated in 'Fung'." The couplet was composed by Master Chu To Kau and written by Master Ng Ba Ling.⁴¹ Besides San Yang Temple, the site also had streams and bridges, temples and pagodas. The structures included Wah Pond, Divine Boat, Zhuangzi Terrace, Yuen Tang Tower, Leung Yuen Temple and Fung Loi Temple. Lo Fung Academy was a world of its own, living up to its name "To Yuen Chin King" ("Taoyan Qianjing" in Putonghua), which means "a piece of blessed land from heaven". Besides, there were inscription epitaphs paying respects to the teachings of Lu Tsu and Laozi. In 1961, the Li Boyang Epitaph was established in Muzha in Taipei by members of Lo Fung. The land on which Lo Fung Academy was built was named "To Yuen Tung Tin," and is in the shape of a gourd upside down. Po Sum Lake, in front of the site, and Pat Sin Leng are connected to Tai Mo Shan. Two of the couplets at the site read:

Chan Tsz Shek writes:

The view is exceptional. In early tides a small boat bathes under the sun. Lights of the fishing boat illuminate half of the river of Yuen Chau Island. The dusk of Pat Sin Leng flutters. The green top of Tai Mo Shan pierces the sky. These scenes paint a picture of nature, of freedom, of superb view, of grandeur. The leisure flows under the eyes. Refined visitors come to search for ancient relics.

Many saints pass on the Tao through the ages. Emperor Xuanyuan rides the dragon in Ding Lake. Master Boyang rides the bull in Han Valley. Lu Dongbin casts his sword in Qing City. Pingshu receives his calling in Tiantai. Each generation seeks a mission, to create, to establish, to raise, to accomplish. One remembers virtues in abundance. I seek to revive the spirit of the Tao.



Chu To Kau writes:

Boats travel the winding river of Pat Sin Leng. Who says there is no spiritual land in Tai Po?

San Yang Temple hosts the immortal masters of the Tao, I dare say there is heaven within To Yuen.

The Taoists of Lo Fung not only placed a strong emphasis on spiritual practice, but also cared about the elderly and the poor. They had distributed rice to 200 senior citizens in Tai Po,⁴² and had donated clothing for disaster relief.⁴³ In 1959, the Taoists of Lo Fung responded to the call by the Wah Kiu Yat Po to help children struck by disaster through selling calligraphy and paintings. They also wrote the foreword for the charity exhibition.⁴⁴ Lo Fung Academy had planned an expansion of the site and the establishment of free schools and elderly homes. Unfortunately, this heavenly retreat disappeared from the face of Hong Kong as the Hong Kong Government developed residential areas in the 1980s. Today, the descendants of Chan Tsz Shek live abroad, and his followers are found in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Malaysia and the Philippines.⁴⁵ The inscription epitaphs at Lo Fung have been moved to Wun Chuen Sin Koon in Ping Che, Fanling.



Sung Sum To Tak Tan (Photography by Yau Chi On)



The first floor of Yan Lo is the Lu Tsu Chamber. The upper level hosts the Jade Emperor Chamber and Kwun Yum Hall. (Photography by Yau Chi On, 2008)



The main hall of Sung Sum To Tak Tan. The deity image of Laozi is in the center while the deity images of Tianhe and Tiande are on the two sides. (Photography by Yau Chi On, 2008)



The view of Yan Lo's Lu Tsu Chamber. The couplet was adopted from the spirit-writing of Lu Tsu. (Photography by Yau Chi On, 2008)



The interior of Fun Loi Leung Yuen's Lu Tsu Temple. (Photography by Ngai Ting Ming)



The couplet in the Lu Tsu Chamber was written by Daoji in 1951. (Photography by Yau Chi On, 2008)



The front part of Leung Yuen is a Lu Tsu Temple. Standing next to the Lu Tsu Temple is a two-storey building with Kwan Tai Chamber on the ground floor and Lung Fung Hall on the second floor. (Photography by Yau Chi On, 2008)



Man Tak Yuen's Lu Tsu Temple. (Provided by Master Choi Hiu)



A view of Man Tak Yuen from a distance. (Provided by Man Tak Yuen)



Fung Loi Leung Yuen (Photography by Yau Chi On)



The interior of Lu Tsu Temple of Man Tak Yuen. (Provided by Master Choi Hiu)



In 1961, Lo Fung Spiritual Practice Institute was at the founding stage. (Provided by Master Lai Tsz Hing)



Fellow members of the Lo Fung Academy took photography in the Lo Fung Academy, which had streams and bridges, temples and pagodas. The site is considered a piece of blessed land from heaven. (Provided by Master Lai Tsz Hing)



The plaque reads "One Vein under Nam Chung." Master Chan Tsz Shek wore a dark gown standing in the middle of the first row. (Provided by Master Lai Tsz Hing)



A façade bearing the plaque "To Yuen Chin King" was erected at the entry gate of the Lo Fung Academy. The second person from the right was Master Chan Tsz Shek. (Provided by Master Lai Tsz Hing)



Buddhist Monasteries

Foreword

The earliest record of the introduction of Buddhism into Hong Kong can be traced back to the North and South Dynasties (428 B.C.). It is said that Indian Zen Master Pui To stayed in Tuen Mun, Hong Kong, while he was waiting for a boat back to his country and founded Tsing Shan Monastery in Tuen Mun and Ling To Monastery in Ha Tsuen, Yuen Long. Although the seeds of Buddhism had been planted long ago, Hong Kong never really had any famous Buddhist temples or senior Buddhist monks. The founding of the above-mentioned Buddhist sites was more a matter of convenient circumstances, and there were no significant developments thereafter to speak of. Concrete developments came only after Hong Kong had become a seaport.

During the late Qing Dynasty, Buddhism in China experienced various crises, including a morality cleanup, the use of temple property for education and the "New Life Movement". The traditional economic order of Buddhist temples was completely destroyed and movements to strengthen and reform Buddhism arose against this backdrop. Scholarly Buddhist followers like Yang Xianshan and Ouyang Jingwu promoted "Lay Buddhism", which injected new life into Buddhism in China. The idea was to revive Buddhism with the motto, "save the heart before saving the world." The fate of Buddhism was ultimately linked to the revival of morality and the nation's fate, and a theoretical model was developed for this new idea, so that Buddhism could be practised in a pragmatic context. Master Taixu led the idea of "Humanitarian Buddhism" and obliged practitioners to participate in the affairs of the world and to alleviate sufferings, thereby confirming the principle of Mahayana Buddhism, "to seek Buddhahood from above, teach and liberate sentient beings from below." These ideas addressed the fact that the previous practice of reclusive "Shanlin Buddhism" encouraged an individualised pursuit in belief and enlightenment by escaping to the mountain

monasteries, and the leaders of the new school called on Buddhists to practise Urban Buddhism and preach by being engaged in the world. From an economic perspective, the new movements changed the traditional self-reliant economy of monasteries: the contemporary monasteries were managed by lay Buddhists, and the modern monastery economy depends on the preaching of Buddhism, the religious services offered and the services provided to society.

The development of Buddhism in Hong Kong was connected to that in China in some ways, but in many other ways it differed, largely because Buddhism had a history of its own in Hong Kong's environment. During the late Qing Dynasty, Zen Masters Dayue, Dunxiu and Yueming travelled south and founded Big Hut in On Ping, Lantau Island. Big Hut was the predecessor of Po Lin Monastery. In 1911, Master Miaocan came to Hong Kong to take over the Tang clan's ancestral meditation hall, Ling Wan Monastery, and developed it into a Buddhist worship site. In 1918, lay Buddhist Lo Ka Cheong established Kick Lok Yuen on Hong Kong Island, offering daily chanting of scriptures and weekly lectures on Buddhism. With efforts by monks and lay followers, Buddhism in Hong Kong finally embarked on its own development.

The building of Buddhist monasteries in Tai Po began in the 1920s, an early period of development for Buddhism in Hong Kong overall. This was also the time when Buddhism underwent dramatic changes in China. Although only a few monasteries were built in the beginning, the different ideologies within Buddhism were all represented, from the traditional Shanlin Buddhism, to the emerging Lay Buddhism and the all-new Urban Buddhism. It is especially worth noting that Master Taixu, paramount leader of modern Buddhism, had lived and taught Buddhism in Tai Po. When Master Taixu passed away, his disciple Master Yinshun also stayed in Tai Po to edit *The Complete Volume of Master Taixu* (太虛大師全書). Indeed, the book was finished in Tai Po, yet another milestone for Buddhism in Hong Kong's or even China's history.



Ma Wo Shan Ting Wai Monastery : Earliest Buddhist Site in Tai Po

Ting Wai Monastery of Ma Wo Shan, established in 1923, is the earliest Buddhist worship site in Tai Po. The founder of the monastery was Monk Master Zengxiu, who was one of the young monks who travelled north to China to study Buddhism. Among the famous monks in Hong Kong, the first to study Buddhism in China was Monk Master Hairen, yet Monk Master Zengxiu studied Buddhism with him in Shanghai. According to Yu Ling Bo:

Master Hairen held high status among an older generation of senior monks in Guangdong. He was the earliest Guangdong monk to visit the Three Jungles of Jiangnan. After he went back to Guangdong to preach, a number of other monks followed his footsteps and visited the Jiangzhe area. These monks, including Fa-ke, Rongqiu, Lingzhan and Maorui, have spread Buddhism to the benefit of many afterwards. Therefore, Master Hairen was a pioneering figure for Chinese Buddhism during the late Qing and early Republican Period.⁴⁶

Master Zengxiu was a native of Kaiping in Guangdong, and his secular name was Huang. Born in the 9th year of the Guangxu Reign (1883), he decided to renounce his secular life at the age of 22. His tonsure was performed by Master Chuanghui at Dajue Monastery in Qixingyan, Zhaoqing. In the twelve lunar month of the same year, Qingyun Monastery of Dinghu Shan recruited disciples and Master Zengxiu took the vow to follow the full Buddhist precepts under Master Conghua and became a disciple of the bhikṣu precepts. When he was 27 years old, he was appointed by Master Shouan as head of the monastery. Master Zengxiu felt that Dinghu Shan focused on Buddhist rituals and lacked theoretical basis for Buddhist teachings and research, so he followed Master Zhanfen and headed north for Buddhist study. He visited Jinshan Monastery of Zhenjiang, Tiantong Monastery of Changzhou, and Tiantong Monastery of Ningbo for Zen study. Training was rigorous. Later he went to Huayan Daxue in Shanghai to attend lectures on the Sutra



The old main gate of Ting Wai Monastery (Provided by Ting Wai Monastery)



The old main hall of Ting Wai Monastery (Provided by Ting Wai Monastery)



Monk Master Zengxiu (Provided by Ting Wai Monastery)



The Great Hall of Ting Wai Monastery was once the most magnificent Buddhist building in Hong Kong. (Photography by Ngai Ting Ming)

of Great Wisdom by Master Yuexia. Among his company were Guangdong monks Hairen and Yuancan.⁴⁷

In the vast land of China, transportation was difficult in the past and there were differences between the faith of the Lingnan area and that of central China. Buddhism has experienced a decline in the modern times, but Buddhism in the Lingnan area was further influenced by the region's changes and became secularised. Worse still, Buddhist precepts and disciplines were often breached. Monkhood was considered an occupation, and the practitioners did not wear Buddhist attire. Only when there were rituals would the monks wear Buddhist robes, thus the expression "be a one-day monk and ring the bell for the day." Buddhism underwent a serious crisis and the urgent need for reform arose. Not only were non-believers disgusted, but also the practitioners were outraged. In this light, to study Buddhism up north became a much-aspired pursuit for the truly devout young monks. It was also common practice to invite masters from the Mainland to lecture in the south. As Hong Kong is the gateway between China and overseas, many monks stopped over in their journeys and gave lectures. Buddhism of the north and the south interacted here, and later Hong Kong would become a popular respite for monks fleeing the wars in the north. These conditions spurred the development of Buddhism in Hong Kong.



The main gate of Ting Wai Monastery (Photography by Ngai Ting Ming)



After two years in Jiangnan, Master Zengxiu returned to Guangdong and stayed at Dajue Monastery. He also frequented Qingyun Monastery in Dinghu, and twice he opposed the closing of Dajue Monastery and turning it into a restaurant. He also led the other monks in defending the monastery against rogue gangs and stopped them from ascending the mountain.⁴⁸ When Master Zengxiu was 38, he once again resigned from his positions in Dinghu, and was referred by Master Zhanfen to Ling Wan Monastery on Kwun Yum Shan in the New Territories to practise purification. The master of Ling Wan Monastery, Miaocan, also studied Buddhism in Jiangnan when he was young. In Hong Kong, he took over the management of Ling Wan Monastery, as well as guided the conversion to Buddhism of Chan Gut Cheung of Tsing Wan Koon in Tuen Mun. Chan went on to become a monk and was known later as Master Hin Hay. A key figure in the revival of Tsing Shan Monastery, Master Hin Hay also founded Yuen Tung Monastery and Tsz Tsuk Lam Monastery in Kwun Yum Shan. As a Buddhist leader, he had made significant contributions to the development of Buddhism in Hong Kong. When Master Zengxiu came to Ling Wan Monastery, he was much respected by Master Miaocan, who introduced him to a broad network of Buddhist followers.⁴⁹

Many followers of Ling Wan Monastery were members of Hong Kong's Chinese upper class. Master Zengxiu established good relations with the third wife of famous merchant Li Bo Kwai of Sanhui, Chow Yee Gu and Lau Sei Gu, possibly because they all originated from the Wuyi area (Xinhui, Taishan, Kaiping, Enping and Heshan).⁵⁰ Ling Wan Monastery is located at the foot of Kwun Yum Shan. At the time, the New Territories was not readily accessible from the rest of Hong Kong. To get to Ling Wan Monastery, one had to take a sedan chair from Tai Po and travel along small mountainous paths. It was a long and strenuous trip.⁵¹ In order to encourage frequent lectures by Zengxiu, and also to provide believers with a convenient place to worship, it was proposed that another Buddhist site be built. Miaocan was in favour of this proposal, and with the help of his disciples, Zengxiu began looking for a site in Tai Po.

In terms of geographical convenience, Tai Po was accessible by boat and rail during the 1920s. In this light, it was a much better location than Ling Wan Monastery, which was hidden in the mountains. In terms of community acceptance, Tai Po was generally more receptive to outsiders and the culture that they brought with them as it was populated by Hakka villagers. For instance, the introduction of Catholicism into Tai Po had never encountered any opposition. Since Buddhism is a traditional Chinese religion, the community generally recognised it. Besides, the monasteries were self-reliant and required no financial support from the local community. They had little impact on the villagers' livelihood, thus Buddhism was easily accepted by the local community. Furthermore, Ma Wo Village was a Hakka village in Tai Po's Luen Yee Heung with a relatively short history. Local affinities were yet to be formed and so there was no resistance against outsiders at the time.

Master Zengxiusearched for blessed land in the To Yuen Tung area, and found the current location of Ting Wai Monastery in Ma Wo Shan. He was drawn to the serenity of the landscape, created by lush bushes and long streams. He raised funds to buy the land, with an area of over 10,000 square feet, from the Hong Kong Government. It was decided that fruit trees would be planted to support the Monastery and benefit others. There was a devout follower Kwan Ng Gu, who came from a wealthy background and showed immense respect for Master Zengxiu. She was prepared to give full financial support to the construction of the Monastery, but passed away two months after construction began. At the time, the foundations had just been laid. Master Zengxiu lamented the misfortune, but the Monastery would still be built with support from other followers. At its grand opening, the Monastery was named Lan Yeuk Yuen to convey a sense of tranquillity.⁵²

The name Lan Yeuk Yuen and the development of farmland for self-support are indicators of the Monastery's intention to practise Zen agriculture (a combination of



Ting Wai Monastery was once named Lan Yeuk Yuen. The name plaque is still being kept today. (Photography by Ngai Ting Ming)

agricultural life and the religious practice of Zen). Although Tai Po was more convenient than Kwun Yum Shan, it was still in the rather remote countryside. Many Buddhist sites in Tai Po, therefore, had "yuen" ("yuan" in Putonghau, meaning "garden") in their names to denote a garden-like environment, such as Lan Yeuk Yuen, Tai Kwong Yuen and Pun Chun Yuen. According to *An Explanation of Phrases and Words* (說文解字), "yuen" is where the fruit trees are." Indeed, until the 1960s, Ma Wo Shan was only accessible by mountain trails from Tai Po Market and was still isolated from the rest of Hong Kong. During the six years of Zengxiu's stay in Lan Yeuk Yuen, he spent much time in contemplation but also held lecture dinner gatherings. At one gathering, Master Xiaohang from Qingyun Monastery in Dinghu gave a lecture. During the lecture, a seventeen year-old female student, Guo from Guangzhou Normal School, asked many questions. She eventually became a Buddhist

nun and founded Tai Kwong Yuen in Tai Po. Again, seeds were sown but growth would only take place many years later.

In the Mainland, the "New Life Movement" was gaining momentum, and its followers attacked traditional religion. Even famous monasteries like Qingyun Monastery of Dinghu were under threat. The monks there requested help from Zengxiu, and he returned to Qingyun Monastery in 1928 to save it from possible demise. Zengxiu left Hong Kong for six years and only returned to Lan Yeuk Yuen in 1934. In the same year, the Main Shrine was built in Lan Yeuk Yuen with funds contributed by Zengxiu and the third wife of Li Bo Kwai to honour the wish of the late Lau Si Gu, co-founder of Lan Yeuk Yuen. The structure is tall and grand, and stood out from the Main Shrines of Hong Kong's monasteries at the time. A year later, Zengxiu returned to



Qingyun Monastery again and stayed there until 1938, when the Japanese invaded Guangdong. As the war progressed, many Buddhist monks and nuns fled to Hong Kong, and they were received by the monasteries here. Even though life was difficult, Lan Yeuk Yuen still took in sixty people and provided temporary refuge to them.

In December of 1941, Hong Kong fell under Japanese occupation. The Japanese military government in Hong Kong implemented a policy of "returning to the countryside" in order to reduce population density and alleviate food shortage. Many citizens were forced to return to their hometowns, and the population in villages in Tai Po decreased dramatically. Many vacant homes became refuge for thieves and looters. The indigenous villagers would only farm their fields during the day, and return to the safety of the mountains or Tai Po Market at night. Some public buildings in Tai Po, such as Ng Sheung Tai in Wun Yiu, were destroyed as the tiles and construction materials were taken and exchanged for money. Zengxiu had intended to return to Guangdong, but the villagers reminded him that Lan Yeuk Yuen could collapse without his leadership. So he stayed. Aged sixty, he survived on whatever food that was preserved and also ate papaya roots and wild vegetation. He pulled through three years and eight months under extremely harsh conditions. Many people died from starvation during that period. Once again, Zengxiu was faced with the dilemmas of life caused by uncertainties, and this experience became the basis for his Buddhist teaching after the war.

After the Japanese occupation in 1947, Zengxiu returned to Qingyun Monastery as master monk. In 1950, he returned to Lan Yeuk Yuen because he did not want to leave it in ruins.⁵³ He became the master monk of Po Lin Monastery on Lantau Island in 1951 but resigned after a year. At this time, an incident happened, sparking Lan Yeuk Yuen's evolution into Ting Wai Monastery today.

When Master Zengxiu returned to Hong Kong from Dinghu, he brought a disciple of his with him. The disciple and a secular man, Leung, later lived in Lan Yeuk Yuen. Leung claimed that he was producing

agricultural products for sale and asked Master Zengxiu if he could lease land in Lan Yeuk Yuen for farming. The kind-hearted Zengxiu.....agreed. Yet, the disciple and Leung cheated on the contract, taking advantage of the fact that Zengxiu did not understand English. They rushed the lawyer to finish up the contract and asked Zengxiu to sign it. Zengxiu was a truly honest man, and was not aware that he had lost his land to a calculated trap. With the contract, the two men assumed management of the land and even told Zengxiu to retire and give up ownership.⁵⁴

After the incident, the other disciples of Zengxiu were enraged. Cheung Kwok Sheung Sau, the wife of Cheung Chuk Shan (native of Xinhui, Guangdong) was particularly furious. The Cheung family was a traditional merchant family. Mrs. Cheung was a devout follower of Buddhism and a very influential figure in the family. Since Zengxiu was from Kaiping and the two flagrant thieves were from Taishan, Mrs. Cheung invited mediation by the Five Districts (Wuyi) Business Welfare Association. After much hassle, Zengxiu managed to reclaim the monastery property. He realised that the monastery was the fruit of hard work and should be adequately preserved and protected. Adopting the suggestions by many, he changed Lan Yuek Yuen into a monastery ("shi fang cong lin") – Ting Wai Monastery – and registered the establishment as a limited company.⁵⁵

Besides lecturing on Buddhism all over Hong Kong, Zengxiu also invested a lot of effort in improving the Monastery. He cleared the land in front of the Main Shrine and built three pavilions. On the left is Man Ming Chung Ting (Pavilion of the Bell of Ten Thousand Names), with a bell weighing 1,000 catties. The names of 10,000 sponsors are inscribed on the bell and this is how the bell got its name. Wai Tor Hall is in the centre, while Yau Hei Ting is on the right. In 1966, Zengxiu retired from his position as Chief Master of Ting Wai Monastery, and the Board of Directors appointed Master Maorui in his succession. The Dharma Protection Committee was established to promote Buddhism, with lay Buddhist Yeung Yat Lam as chairperson and Cheung Kwok Sheung Sau as vice chairperson. Meanwhile, Master



Maorui was also from Guangdong and his hometown was Kaiping. He renounced his secular life when he was twenty years old. In 1931, when he was 28, he went on a study tour of the famous monasteries in Jiangnan and visited Master Da-de. In 1932, he came to Hong Kong and founded Nam Tin Chuk Monastery in Tsuen Wan. After the war, he donated land for the building of Tung Lum Nien Fah Tong. Later he became one of the famous monks in Hong Kong. Master Leguo succeeded Maorui. A monk from the north, Leguo came to Hong Kong after the Liberation. He was one of the "three elders from the Northeast" and also well known in Hong Kong. Leguo was succeeded by Ruitao, who was also from north-eastern China and who studied Buddhism at Banyue Buddhist School in Changchun. After Master Ruitao, Master Yan Wai, also chairman of the Board of Directors, took over management of the monastery. During his term, he built Po Tung Tower and the Zengxiu Memorial Hall. Yan Wai's secular name was Ngan Siu Tong and he was also known as Sai Leung. Yan Tsan was his Buddhist title. He was an early graduate of the University of Hong Kong and a well-known lay Buddhist. Having learned about Buddhism when he was young, Ngan had not left the pursuit of the faith and studied Zen with Monk Master Xuyun. In 1948, Ms. Jennings came to see Xuyun from the United States, and Ngan was the interpreter. His interpretation was described by knowledgeable people as just right, "without any redundancy, nor was any meaning lost. Xuyun delivered Buddhism with



Monk Master Zengxiu's Appointment Certificate of Teacher issued by the Hong Kong Buddhist Sangha Association. (Provided by Ting Wai Monastery)



The Wai Tor Hall in the Ting Wai Monastery in the past. (provided by Ting Wai Monastery)



Zengxiu Memorial Hall for the founding Monk Master Zengxiu. (Photography by Ngai Ting Ming)



depth, Yan interpreted deftly. The American Ms. Jennings could fully understand the Perfect School (Yuanzong), and it was her blessing."⁵⁶ When Ngan was seventy years old, Yan renounced his secular life after his wife passed away and his children grew up, and became a monk at Po Lin Monastery.

At present, Ting Wan Monastery is chiefly managed by Master Tsor Wai, who used to be Master Zengxiu's disciple. Previously head of Po Lin Monastery on Lantau Island, he is highly reputed in Hong Kong. Since his incumbency, he has actively engaged in religious teaching and the chanting of the scriptures. Besides regular worship services, Ting Wai Monastery also provides religious services to followers, who come to the monastery to honour the Buddha. However, the world that the monastery is in has changed rapidly. It is now located behind tall and beautiful buildings, and appears decrepit in comparison. In addition, the main structures, such as Lan Yeuk Yuen and the Main Shrine, have shown visible signs of decay. The monastery is currently raising funds for renovation.

Tai Kwong Yuen in Shek Kwu Lung: First Buddhist Lectorium to Promote Free Schooling after the War

Shek Kwu Lung, a secluded place, is located next to Kam Shan in Tai Po. In the 1960s, even the children living in Kam Shan would not play in Shek Kwu Lung because it was deeply mysterious. Yet, they would remember a Buddhist nun from there, who always brought along her radio and strolled in a leisurely manner. This well-liked Buddhist nun was Nun Master Tsz Cheung, founder of Buddhist site Tai Kwong Yuen.

As mentioned above, the renouncement of secular life by Nun Master Tsz Cheung, whose secular name was Guo, was a well-known story. She was born in 1911 in Shunde, Guangdong. After graduation from Guangzhou Normal School at the age of seventeen, she had planned to continue her study of philosophy at Zhongshan University in Guangzhou. While she was in Hong Kong with her school

friends for vacation, she learned that Master Xiaohang of Qingyun Monastery in Dinghu Shan was lecturing in Lan Yeuk Yuen. Since she was interested in philosophy, she went to the lecture hoping to learn about Buddhism. She was deeply moved by the lecture, and studied the Buddhist scripture given to her by Master Xiaohang. She realised that uncertainty was a fact of life, and so wished to renounce her secular life. She was ordained at Ling Wan Monastery on Kwun Yum Shan, and became a disciple of Xiaohang and was given the Buddhist name Kok Yan. She continued to pursue wisdom, and accepted the precepts the following year at Qixia Monastery in Nanjing. She also invited Master Rongtong to be the master of her grand precept ceremony. Her new life began as she joined study tours, lectured and preached.

Tai Kwong Yuen used to be the meditation hall and lecture venue for Kok Yan. There are a few theories regarding the date of its founding. The earliest is between 1927 and 1928; some think it was 1930. Some said 1931 and even 1937. Given that Kok Yan renounced her secular life in 1928, it was quite unlikely that she would purchase a Buddhist site immediately after she had become a nun. As to the date of 1937, it was also unlikely because there are records of a lecture by Master Taixu at Tai Kwong Yuen in 1935. Thus, the founding date of Tai Kwong Yuen should have been in the early 1930s. According to Master Chuk Mo, Tai Kwong Yuen was originally organised by the people of *Tai Kwong Daily* (大光報). It was later sold to Master Tsz Cheung.⁵⁷ *Tai Kwong Daily* (大光報) was founded in the early Republican Period by a group of Christians, Au Fung Chi, Wan Man Kai and Cheung Chuk Ling, and its establishment was proposed by Dr. Sun Yat Sen. In 1927, *Tai Kwong Daily* (大光報) invited Lu Xun to Hong Kong, who delivered speeches to Hong Kong's intellectuals at the YMCA hall in Sheung Wan. The speeches, entitled "The Old Tune is Over" (老調子已經唱完) and "A Voiceless China" (無聲的中國), sparked the spread of the new culture to Hong Kong. The name "Tai Kwong" ("Da Guang" in Putonghua, meaning "the great light") for the newspaper was taken from the Bible. Matthew 4:16 reads, "the people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the religion and



The view of Tai Kwong Yuen from a distance (Photography by Ngai Ting Ming)



The Kwun Yum Chamber of Tai Kwong Yuen (Photography by Ngai Ting Ming)



The interior chamber of Tai Kwong Yuen (Photography by Ngai Ting Ming)



The Chamber of Buddha of Tai Kwong Yuen (Photography by Ngai Ting Ming)



shadow of death light is sprung up." "The great light" can be interpreted as hope and redemption. It is unknown why Kok Yan did not change the name after she bought Tai Kwong Yuen. Nevertheless, the great light is not a privilege of Christians. In *the Amitabha Sutra* (佛說阿彌陀經), the Amitabha (infinite light) Buddha is one of the Buddhas of the west. It has been said in the scripture that "the great light illuminates all," thus "the broad sweep of wisdom and light illuminates the common people," and wisdom and light can reach every life. With Kok Yan's educational background, it is not surprising that she preserved the name of Tai Kwong Yuen.

When Kok Yan was 24 years old in 1935, she preached in Foshan. One of the monk masters heard her lecture and thought that her lecture style resembled that of Master Hairen, and he asked her if she was Hairen's student. When he learned that she had never met Hairen, he recommended her to visit Hairen on Lantau Island. At the time, Hairen was 49 years old, and was meditating in a Buddhist lodge in On Ping. Hairen was the first modern monk from Guangdong to seek Buddhism in the north. He had spent ten years in the monasteries in Jiangnan and acquired vast knowledge and wisdom. He was hailed "King of the Suramgama Sutra" of Hong Kong's Buddhism and was highly respected. When he was on Lantau Island, Buddhist followers often sought his teaching. His disciples included lay Buddhist Lam Ling Chen, bhikṣu such as Wai Kwong, Cho Yun, Chuen Wai, Chen Sheung, Liu Chi, Yuen Wai, Wan Leung and Shing Yeung, and bhikṣu nuns such as Tsz Cheung, Foon Wing, Foon Yu, Man Sang and Wai Kwong. These were all prominent Buddhists in Hong Kong. Kok Yan's new Buddhist name Tsz Cheung was given by Hairen.

Under Hairen's guidance, Tsz Cheung made further progress in her understanding of Buddhism. Since Hairen was long connected to Buddhism in Jiangnan, Master Taixu, a prominent leader of Buddhism, came to Tai Kwong Yuen to preach in December of 1935. That was Taixu's fifth visit to Hong Kong. In Taixu's speech delivered at Lee Garden, he discusses Buddhism in a global context, and recognises that Hong Kong as an international city plays a special

role in the development of Buddhism. During this visit, Taixu also visited Tai Kwong Yuen in Tai Po and the Site of Enlightenment in Shek Kong, and gave important speeches at these two venues. In Tai Kwong Yuen, he delivered the speech, "The Practice of Seclusion and the Treasures of Monkhood" (阿蘭若行與養成僧寶), which could have been an impromptu arising from his observations of Tai Kwong Yuen:

A retreat enables followers to live among the mountains for meditation, which encourages in-depth understanding of Buddhism. Observations and thoughts are pure, where the mind is not tainted by the affairs of the world. Soon, the Zen will descend upon the thoughtful observer, who will be blessed with enlightening wisdom. The understanding of the universe comes after that.

I come here to Tai Kwong Yuen today, and feel this sense of self-motivated liberation. Serenity comes naturally to the one in retreat. Having learned Buddhism, you can practise the principles here in both thought and action. The three trades can be practised and the six roots eliminated. Thus in your daily lives, you will be engaged in the principles of Buddhism in every one of your actions and thoughts.⁵⁸

Taixu explained the key points to practising Buddhism in retreat. From this speech, one can see that, Taixu, pioneer of modern Humanist Buddhism, still placed much importance in the practice of Buddhist meditation in retreat. He thought that "to build Buddhism in modern times, successful practice of Buddhist principles is very important. If some monks, as opposed to all, can reach Buddhist enlightenment, it would be immensely beneficial to the establishment of modern Buddhism."⁵⁹ At the end of his speech, he emphasised once again:

Now that there is Tai Kwong Yuen in Tai Po. This is a very suitable venue for meditation because it has all the favourable conditions for quiet meditation. This place can be the central meditation venue with

*others as supplementary. We have the old scriptures as reference for the study of Buddhism. As for teachers, we have Master Hairen to provide guidance. You should deem this place an invaluable resource, and with a devout heart, seek accomplishments and progress in your meditation and enlightenment. You will eventually become a strong group of Buddhist followers.*⁶⁰

These words of encouragement became the motivation for devout followers at Tai Kwong Yuen, even though the surroundings had changed significantly since Taixu's visit. After this visit, a long lasting relationship was cultivated between Tai Kwong Yuen and the disciples of Taixu. Exchanges between disciples of Taixu, such as Master Chuk Mo and Master Yinshun, and Tai Kwong Yuen lasted till the 1950s. Yinshun lived in Mui Shau Jing Seh (present-day Tai Wo Monastery hosting the Tai monks) for a period of time, which was close to Tai Kwong Yuen. There Yinshun edited *The Complete Works of Taixu* (太虛大師全書), a significant development for Buddhism in Hong Kong.

Master Kok Kwong, chairman of The Hong Kong Buddhist Association, said Master Tsz Cheung ("Cixiang" in Putonghua, meaning "kind-hearted") had truly lived up to her Buddhist name: "She has a kind heart and always acts in kind-hearted ways."⁶¹ She respected her profession and charity work. During the Japanese Occupation, Tai Kwong Yuen was self-reliant and well respected for providing refuge for those affected by the War. After the War ended, she established Tai Kwong Free School and taught children who had lost the opportunity for education. The school was indeed the first pioneer of free schooling in Hong Kong after the War and was an exemplary for generations to come. According to Master Chuk Mo, Tai Kwong Free School had the following beginning:

The establishment of Tai Kwong Free School in Tai Kwong Yuen began in spring of 1946, according to Master Tsz Cheung. After the War, Hong Kong embarked on the reconstruction of education and

*culture. Master Tsz Cheung felt that her monastery was becoming too quiet and thought it could use a little liveliness. In the New Territories, the War took away many poor children's opportunity for education and the urgent need for free schooling arose. Master Tsz Cheung followed the principle of Buddhist education, to mutually benefit herself and the children, and decided to provide free Buddhist schooling.*⁶²

The free school was established under difficult circumstances. However, Master Tsz Cheung persevered and led her disciples through hard times:

*The society had only just begun to stabilise after the War. The economy has been severely interrupted and the circumstances were not favourable. Besides, the Government provided little subsidy. Master Tsz Cheung put in all that she had, probably only a few hundred dollars, and started recruiting students despite the risks and uncertainties. The facilities were poor, but fortunately several supporters volunteered to teach at the school and funds lasted for a while. From 1947 to 1948, conditions improved and more students were recruited. The small classroom could no longer meet the increasing demand and Master Tsz Cheung once again took the risk to construct a school building. She was only able to complete construction of the new building by selling her farmland and raising funds from the community. The building now houses the classrooms for Primary One to Five.*⁶³

Initially, Master Tsz Chueng turned three bays in one of the halls into classrooms and provided basic education for orphans or children without education. In 1950, three more classrooms were added; in 1952 the school had two additional classrooms. After the War, the rural economy hardly revived. The two-dollar tuition fee and stationery expenses charged to private schools were paid by Tai Kwong Yuen, thus it was a free school. The funds came from the self-reliant monks and followers in Tai Kwong Yuen, who



*sold produce such as lychee, longan, papaya, honey and seasonal flowers. The school was maintained for a few decades, until the Hong Kong Government implemented compulsory free primary education.*⁶⁴

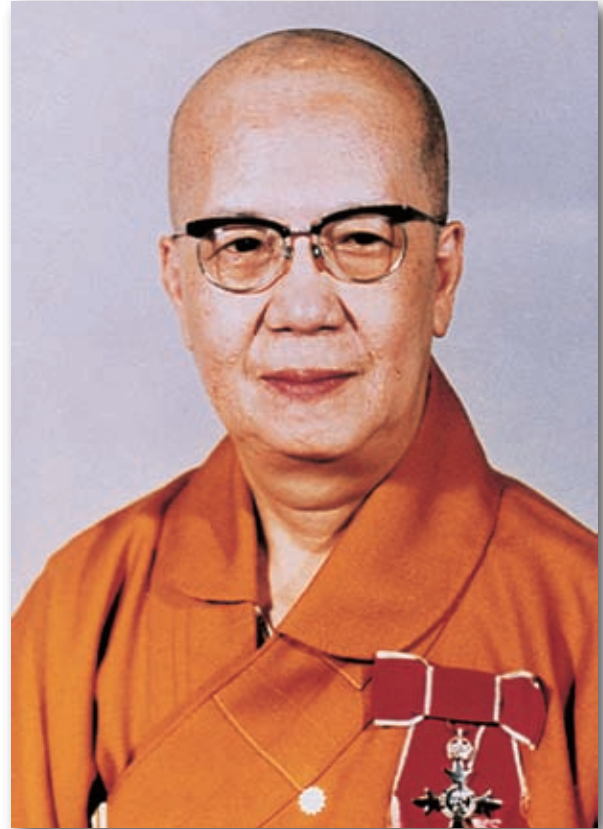
Besides managing the school, Master Tsz Cheung also participated actively in curriculum design:

*It is not easy to set up a Buddhist school, but it is even more difficult to write textbooks systematically, from easier levels to more difficult ones. Master Tsz Cheung referred to *Textbooks for Buddhist Primary Schools*, published by the Hong Kong Buddhist Association, and edited the textbooks herself. She has already finished the textbooks for Primary Five, and is working on illustrations for the textbooks to make them more accessible to young minds.*⁶⁵

Master Tsz Chueng was also very concerned with the quality of the teachers. When Master Wing Sheung finished secondary school in 1953, Master Tsz Cheung wanted her to teach at the free school. However, Master Wing Sheung felt that her education was not sufficient and refused. Later in 1961, Master Wing Sheung received a diploma from the Chinese Department of United College, and Tsz Cheung asked her to teach at the free school again. This time, Wing Shueng readily accepted the offer and became a teacher.



Tai Kwong School at the early stage of establishment. (Provided by Tai Kwong Yuen)



Master Bhiksuni Tsz Chueng (Provided by Tai Kwong Yuen)

Under Master Tsz Cheung's leadership and care, Tai Kwong Free School developed rapidly:

Master Tsz Cheung saw that poor students were not able to continue with secondary education and that there were hardly enough secondary schools in the New Territories. So she applied to the Government in 1956 to start a secondary school. She registered Tai Kwong Yuen as a non-profit provider of education and began raising funds to build a school campus. The first phase of construction was completed in August of 1962, with an auditorium and four classrooms. Soon, too many students were signing up and the classrooms were unable to meet the needs. Phase 2 of construction thus began, a five-storey building with twelve classrooms, a science laboratory and a

library. Construction fees exceeded the budget and the school ran into financial difficulties. Master Yuen Wai and lay Buddhist Lam Ling Chen extended helping hands and raised funds at the Tok Ling Kok Yuen fundraiser in August of 1965. Construction resumed and was completed in March of 1967. The Hong Kong Government approved Tai Kwong Free School as a private subsidised school, and in 1975 it became a fully subsidised secondary school.⁶⁰

Besides expanding Tai Kwong School, Master Tsz Cheung continued to break new ground in education. In 1971, Tai Kwong Kindergarten was established in Shek Lei, Kwai Chung. During the mid-1990s, she contributed to the building of schools in Mainland China as well. As a result of her exceptional accomplishments in charity work, she was awarded the M.B.E by the British Government in 1978. In

1997, Master Tsz Cheung retired due to ill health, and passed away in 1999. Her disciple, Master Wing Sheung, succeeded her as manager of Tai Kwong Yuen. Master Tsz Cheung instructed Master Wing Sheung to establish the Buddhist Tai Kwong Yuen Foundation Limited with her life savings, and to continue providing education and establishing Hope Schools locally and in the Mainland. Master Wing Sheung, whose secular name was Chow, had held friendships with prominent Buddhists such as Hairen, Tsz Cheung, Lam Ling Chen, Hin Chi, Fat Fong, Yuen Ying and Man Chi. In 1966, she obtained her Bachelor of Arts degree from The Chinese University of Hong Kong and became the succeeding disciple of Master Tsz Cheung. She was also an active participant in charity work and had contributed time and effort in bettering the communities in Hong Kong and Mainland China. Unfortunately, she also passed away in 2002.



The existing school building has been renovated (Photography by Ngai Ting Ming)



The current Master Nun at Tai Kwong Yuen is Master Yuen Wai. She was Master Wing Sheung's disciple, and she has followed Masters Tsz Cheung and Wing Sheung for 44 years. Besides managing the lectorium's affairs, she is also a director of the Hong Kong Buddhist Association and the chairperson of Buddhist Chi Wai Day Nursery.

Pun Chun Yuen of the Lotus Association of Hong Kong in Shek Kwu Lung: Lay Buddhist Lectorium for the Worship of the Bodhisattva Tara

One feature of modern Buddhism in China is that lay Buddhists have become increasingly influential. During the late Qing Dynasty and early Republican Period, intellectual lay Buddhists who had in-depth knowledge of Buddhism gave advice for the reform and development of the Buddhist faith in China. Entering the Republican period, Buddhism became increasingly urbanised. Many Buddhist merchants were kind benefactors and they had assumed important roles in Buddhist organisations. There emerged joint efforts by monks and lay followers to develop Buddhism. In Hong Kong, lay Buddhist merchants supported the religion in many different ways, such as contributing funds to build temples and monasteries like Ting Wai Monastery, sponsoring prominent monks to lecture in Hong Kong, such as the 1920 visit by Taixu and his lecture in Quarry Bay, or founding lay Buddhist organisations. Some even established lay Buddhist lectoriums like the Hong Kong Mantra School for Lay Buddhists set up in 1925.



The old main entrance of Pun Chun Yuen of the Lotus Association of Hong Kong (Photography by Ngai Ting Ming)



The main entrance of Pun Chun Yuen of the Lotus Association of Hong Kong (Photography by Ngai Ting Ming)



The main gate of Pun Chun Yuen (Photography by Yau Chi On)



Scene of the garden of Pun Chun Yuen (Photography by Ngai Ting Ming)



The old main gate of Pun Chun Yuen (Photography by Yau Chi On)

Located in Shek Kwu Lung, Tai Po, Pun Chun Yuen of the Lotus Association of Hong Kong is a lay Buddhist lectorium. It is now managed by the Lotus Association of Hong Kong, established in 1933. Yet, the association did not found the lectorium. The original name of the site was Pun Chun Yuen. In 1967, it was donated by the original owners to the Lotus Association of Hong Kong, which changed its name. According to a brief introduction found at the site,

Pun Chun Yuen, with an area of over 20,000 square feet, is located at No. 17 Shek Kwu Lung in Tai Po. Originally it was owned by the family of the late gentry Wong Siu Wai. The lectorium has had a long history. Even before the War, it was a Buddhist lectorium frequented by many followers. Pun Chuen Yuen's name came from the fact that lay Buddhist Wong Siu Wai used to take a half-day trip to the site to discuss Buddhism with two close friends. "Pun Chun" ("Banchun" in Putonghua, literally meaning "half spring") implies "three people and half a day".



Wong Siu Wai, also known as Wong Tak Wai, was a Hong Kong merchant. He was the owner of Wing Lee Wai Wine Merchants, which was founded in 1876 and began its Hong Kong business in 1905. Wing Lee Wai Wine Merchants was a very important wine business in modern China – its Wujia Pijiu (also known as "Wu Chia Pi Chiew") and Meiguilu Jiu (also known as "Mei Kuei Lu Chiew") were very well known. The success of the winery could be attributed largely to Wong Siu Wai's efforts, as he said, "I remember having abandoned education for business over twenty years ago. Since then I have travelled all over Asia and the Americas. Where Wing Lee Wai wine was sold, I went there to understand the market.I was a very busy man and did not have time for the pursuit of spiritual knowledge."⁶⁷ The winery business grew under his leadership and the wine sold very well in the Mainland and abroad.


Wong Siu Wan became interested in traditional religions in 1924. The first god he came to know was Wong Tai Sin:

Around five years ago, a friend, who worshipped Wong Tai Sin, gave fortune telling readings and cure for illness through spirit calling in his spare time. The advice he gave was always good, and he invited me to one of his spirit calling sessions. Many people were seeking advice there. Wong Tai Sin was always right in his advice, and the people left contented because their requests had been answered. I was amazed. Later, my son slipped on his way to school on a rainy day and hurt his left hand. His hand still had not healed after a few months, and both Chinese and western doctors were not able to find out why. I brought him to see my friend, who told him to kneel down and pray to Wong Tai Sin. My friend, Wong Tai Sin's spirit in fact, directed us to get herbal dressing from a certain bone setting practice that would heal my son's hand immediately. I followed the instruction, and the dressing indeed worked. I started believing in Wong Tai Sin. Less than a month later, a

*partner at the winery had severe stomach ache. The Chinese doctors offered little help, and many western doctors said he had to have his appendix removed or he would die. He did not want the operation. He was the only son in his lineage and could not take the matter lightly. Yet at the same time, his condition deteriorated and became critical. I thought Wong Tai Sin was powerful, and wanted to see if advice could be obtained for this situation and to prevent surgery. A prescription was obtained, with advice on how to use the traditional Chinese medicine. Shortly after starting treatment, the partner emerged well from the most critical condition. The next day, another prescription was obtained. A black sesame concoction was made, and just after one dose his condition improved significantly. The third prescription was a very common herbal concoction and he was completely healed after taking it. From then on, I decided to worship Wong Tai Sin.*⁶⁸



Lay Buddhist Wong Siu Wan (Provided by Pun Chun Yuen)



After this incident, Wong Siu Wai became immensely interested in traditional religion. In order to be more closely connected with Wong Tai Sin, he started learning spirit calling, although he was not successful in the beginning. He later learned that the spirit-calling pen would only move if he had chanted the Heart Sutra in his mind all day. He followed the instruction and the pen finally moved. After a month Wong Siu Wai could work a complete piece of advice from the spirit. Since then, he learned the religion and practised spirit calling at night and whenever he was away from work, and became quite knowledgeable in the subject. Most people used spirit calling for advice and healing, but Wong thought of it as a way to learn about religion. This reflects his immense passion for traditional religion. However, the teachings of Wong Tai Sin, according to Wong, were mostly on Buddhism:

*I studied the Diamond Sutra, the Dharani of Great Compassion and True Scripture of the Peach Garden Holy Emperor Kuan Who Illuminates the Sacred daily. I also printed Buddhist books for distribution, books that guide followers to do good for society. The spirit always urged followers to never do evil and only do good deeds. I felt strongly that these words of caution were beneficial to the world. When I called the spirit every night for guidance, the first words were always "everything we do we do for goodness' sake". I continued my quest for spiritual faith and was joined by more and more people. My young son also became religious and started to perform spirit calling. He was a better medium than I was. The messages he got were usually about how to differentiate between right and wrong, and sometimes the pen moved for a thousand words in just a few minutes. When he was not yet ten years old, he could write hundreds of poems with the spirit and we made a volume of the poetry, *Collected Poems of the Wind and the Waves*. When he grew up, he learned more about Buddhism and explained to us the concepts of "form*

*and emptiness", "human", "I", "living beings" and "life", as well as the difference between the Buddhas and immortal beings. This information was our basic understanding of Buddhism.*⁶⁰

The followers became closer to the Buddha as a result of the spirit's guidance:

*A few months later, the spirit named a few faithful followers and told us to go to the fourth floor of the Wing Lee Wai Building in Hong Kong. There Wong Tai Sin told everyone, "In this world today, the hearts of men are corrupt and Buddhism is the only salvation. You are all followers of the Buddha, so I now tell you I am the Bodhisattva Tata. You must follow the Buddha's way and stop spirit calling at once. The spirit-calling altar was never a part of Buddhism, so you must renounce the practice and follow the righteous way. If you continue to do spirit calling, you will go against the Buddha. I saw that you did not have much wisdom, and you would not believe unless something close to a miracle had happened. Thus I spoke through the spirit to open the door to Buddhism for you. Yet is it important for you to understand that, you must stop spirit calling because it can cause evil. Why? Since many spirits responding to your call are not true immortal beings and gods, but the evil spirit pretending to be them. You must stop spirit calling, and study the Diamond Sutra and the Dharani of Great Compassion regularly. It is not yet time to promote Buddhism. Wait three more years, then you may make your own plans for preaching. It will be the right timing then."*⁷⁰

With guidance from Wong Tai Sin, steps were taken to practise the transition to true Buddhism. This incident was recorded in detail because, to seek Buddhist guidance, Wong Siu Wai went to Shanghai and became a disciple of Master Yinguang, the modern master of Buddhism in China. In



1928, Wong Siu Wai founded the Tata Buddhist Association in San Po Kong, Kowloon. The motto of the society was "to practise and learn Buddhism, with the hopes that knowledge can be acquired; to preach Buddhism, in order to benefit the self and others."⁷¹ He sent the programme of Buddhist learning to Master Yinguang for his review, who replied, "after the study of Buddhism, Guanyin followed. Then adding the worship of the Bodhisattva Tata. May I ask how you decided on this?"⁷² Wong then wrote down the reasons and sought Yinguang's guidance. Master Yinguang gave him detailed instructions, and reminded him to strike a balance between his gratitude for the Bodhisattva Tata and the respect for mainstream Buddhism.

From your reply, I can tell that the Bodhisattva Tata has been good with his guidance. The Bodhisattva Kok Ming Miu Hang and the Bodhisattva Tata are very much like each other. You should understand that spirit calling cannot be relied upon. The Bodhisattva has used an unconventional way to guide you to true Buddhism – desires drive actions, leading you to Buddhist epiphany. The Bodhisattva Tata has helped you immensely and should not be forgotten, but you should not include the Bodhisattva in the formal worship rituals. If Buddhist rituals do not even include the Bodhisattvas Manjusri, Samantabhadra, Ksitigarbha, and Maitreya, then others should not be a part either. Yet these Bodhisattvas are among the Bodhisattvas of Mahasthamaprapta. I do not see any harm in your worshipping the Bodhisattva Tata at the society, but if other people did not understand, there would be trouble. Thus it is better to worship the Bodhisattva Tata in a separate place.⁷³

Wong Siu Wai was a merchant. His pursuit of traditional religion arose from a practical need, but once he began his pursuit, there was no going back. He originally sought the way through spirit calling (he became a disciple of Sik Sik Yuen Wong Tai Sin Temple), then he became a spirit medium and eventually converted to Buddhism and

organised a lay Buddhist organisation. During the 1930s, he bought Pun Chun Yuen in Tai Po and used it as a venue to discuss Buddhism with his friends. The venue later became a proper worship site, a lectorium for lay Buddhists. In 1953, the Tata Buddhist Association moved to Pun Chun Yuen, and the site became an official lectorium.⁷⁴ Wong Siu Wai transported three statues of the western Three Nobles from Jiangsu to the lectorium, and placed rare bronze kylins to guard the hall. The Main Shrine, where the Buddhas are worshipped, has been thoughtfully designed and decorated to give it a beautiful garden landscape and an air of grandeur. Nevertheless, the Bodhisattva Tata has not been forgotten. A small chamber in the garden is used to worship the Bodhisattva and daily incense is offered. The master of Pun Chun Yuen said that, even today, followers worship the Bodhisattva in the lectorium frequently.



The wall is decorated with charms (Photography by Ngai Ting Ming)



A bronze plaque of the Bodhisattva Tata Society is hung on the main door (Photography by Ngai Ting Ming)



The three Buddha images in the Great Hall of Pun Chun Yuen. The images were crafted by famous Jiangsu craftsmen. (Photography by Ngai Ting Ming)

Wong Siu Wai respected Master Yinguang greatly. He had always wished to invite Yinguang to preach in Hong Kong, but unfortunately the master passed away in 1940 and never came to Hong Kong. After Master Yinguang passed away, Wong Siu Wai asked a friend of his to seek a sarira of the master from Monk Miaozhen, along with a robe, shoes and socks, to be placed temporarily in Pun Chun Yuen. He was going to build a pagoda to permanently host the items. However, ten years went by and the plan was never realised, not even after Wong Siu Wai passed away. However, it eventually facilitated the construction of the Sarira Pagoda of Master Yinguang by Tung Lum Nien Fah Tong in 1960.

Hong Kong lay Buddhist Wong Siu Wai had asked

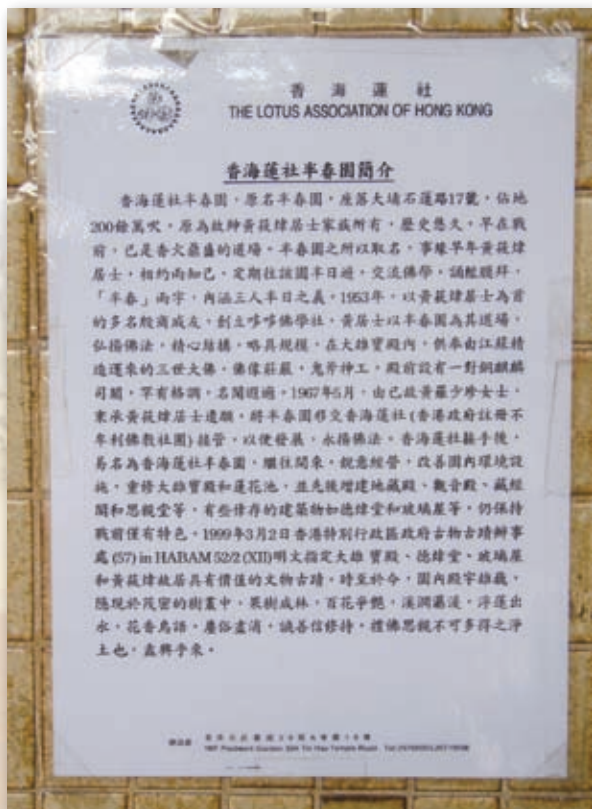
his friend, Chow Ching Shui, to acquire a sarira, a headgear, a robe, and a pair each of socks and shoes [of Master Yinguang], to be placed temporarily in Pun Chun Yuen in Tai Po. He had planned to seek the right site to build a memorial hall. Lay Buddhists Ma Foon Kwong, Lo Chi Chung and Shek Shun Fook heard about the plan and suggested that Tung Lum Nien Fah Tong in Village Wan build the sarira pagoda. Mrs. Wong Siu Wai and her nephew Yiu Suen agreed immediately and Mrs. Wong contributed 1,000 dollars as a start. After two years and with efforts by many lay Buddhists, the pagoda was completed. Construction costs stood at approximately 60,000 dollars.⁷⁵

In May of 1967, Ms. Wong Siu Wai followed the wish of her late husband and donated Pun Chun Yuen to the Lotus Association of Hong Kong so that it could be developed. The Lotus Association of Hong Kong was established in 1933 by Tsang Pik Shan, Lee Kung Tat and Chao Fut Wai. It was a lay Buddhist association for the preaching of Amida Buddhism. Tsang Pik Shan, a native of Panyu in Guangdong, was a well-known Buddhist activist and educator in Hong Kong. In 1964, Tsang was awarded the M.B.E. by the Queen of the United Kingdom to recognise his immense contribution to Hong Kong. Tsang was the first educator to receive this recognition.

Pun Chun Yuen was renamed Pun Chun Yuen of the Lotus Association of Hong Kong, and improvements were made. The lotus pond in the Main Shrine was renovated, and new additions were made, including the Bodhisattva Ksitigarbha Chamber, Kwun Yum Chamber, Buddhist Scripture Library and Memorial Hall. Structure damaged during the War, such as Tak Wai Tong and the Glass House, have been restored preserving their pre-war characteristics. In 1979, Master Daoyuan conducted the consecration ceremony for the Kwun Yum Statue in Kwun Yum Hall. He also preached for seven days in the lectorium. In 1999, the Antiquities and Monument Office declared the Main Shrine, Tak Wai Tong and the Glass House in Pun Chun Yuen protected monuments.



The Kwun Yum Chamber of Pun Chun Yuen (Photography by Ngai Ting Ming)



A poster in the garden introducing Pun Chun Yuen of the Lotus Association of Hong Kong (Photography by Yau Chi On)



A house in the garden (Photography by Yau Chi On)



The Great Hall of Pun Chun Yuen (Photography by Yau Chi On)



A pair of bronze unicorns guard the Hall (Photography by Yau Chi On)



Footnotes

- ¹ Faure, David, Luk Hung Kay, Ng Lun Ngai Ha, eds., *Inscriptions and Epitaphs in Hong Kong* (香港碑銘匯編) vol. 3 (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Urban Council, 1986), p. 81.
- ² Ng Ba Ling, *Sceneries and Cultures of the New Territories* (新界風光) (Hong Kong: Oversea Chinese Daily, 1960 1st ed., 1962 3rd ed).
- ³ "The Grand Opening of the Renovated Yan Lo Buddhist Monastery" (隱廬佛社重修大埔堂落成記), 1968; the inscription is found at Yan Lo Buddhist Monastery's Tai Po site in Kam Shan.
- ⁴ The research on Wun Yiu's Fan Sin Temple was based on Yau Chi On's research project: God of Potters, Temples and Community History: Wun Yiu, Tai Po, 2007-2008, commissioned by the Antiquities and Monuments Office, Leisure and Cultural Services Department.
- ⁵ See Faure, David, Luk Hung Kay, Ng Lun Ngai Ha, eds., *Inscriptions and Epitaphs in Hong Kong* (香港碑銘匯編), p. 307.
- ⁶ See Faure, David, Luk Hung Kay, Ng Lun Ngai Ha, eds., *Inscriptions and Epitaphs in Hong Kong* (香港碑銘匯編), p. 83, p. 307.
- ⁷ See "Traditional Festivals: All Eyes on Tai Ping Qing Jiao" by Choi Chi Cheung and Lui Wing Sing in this book.
- ⁸ For more details, see Tanaka Issei, *Lineage and Theatre in China* (中國の宗族と演劇) (Tokyo: Tokyo University Press, 1985), vol. 2, chapter 3.
- ⁹ Leung Yu Wah, *Walking Through the Villages: History, Folklores and Affections for the Countryside* (穿村：鄉郊歷史、傳聞與鄉情) (Hong Kong: Cosmos Books, 2002), pp. 54-55.
- ¹⁰ Inscription epitaph of Fan Sin Temple's 1976 Renovation, placed inside the temple.
- ¹¹ It is an accepted view that To Yuen Tung was founded in 1924, but according to *The Origin of Sin Tin Tao* (道脈總源流), "To Yuen Tung in Tai Po was established during the Jiayin year of the Republican Period to provide an escape from worldly affairs. Construction was completed in Wuwu. Two scrolls of Collected Poems of To Yuen (桃源詩聯集) were distributed to friends." Thus To Yuen Tung's construction should have been completed in 1918 (the Wuwu year) instead of 1924. See Tin Siu Tsuen, *The Origin of Sin Tin Tao* (道脈總源流) (1924), p.28.
- ¹² See Yau Chi On, ed., *A Hundred Year's Taoism: Taoism and Taoist Temples in Hong Kong* (道風百年) (Hong Kong: Leeman Publishing, Taoist Culture & Information Centre of Fung Ying Seen Koon, 2002), pp. 87-88, the section on To Yuen Tung.
- ¹³ See Faure, David, Luk Hung Kay, Ng Lun Ngai Ha, eds., *Inscriptions and Epitaphs in Hong Kong* (香港碑銘彙編), p. 467.
- ¹⁴ Li Xin, *New Territories Overview* (新界概覽) vol. 1 (New Territories: New Territories Publishing House, 1954), p. 70.
- ¹⁵ *Rites of Gratitude in Canton* (粵境酬恩) (16th year of the Guangxu Reign), p. 5.
- ¹⁶ Yip Chu Ming, "The Fragrance of Confucianism" (芳草儒林), *Guangzhou Wenyi* (廣州文藝), vol. 339, issue 3, 2004, p. 66.
- ¹⁷ Author's note: the bronze statue Master Guangcheng was lost during the Japanese occupation. After the 1990 reconstruction of the establishment, the current ceramic statue was made based on a portrait. Interview with Wong Wing Yin and Lee Kwong Tai, 19 April 2008, at Hong Kong Sing Kung Cho Tong.
- ¹⁸ Hong Kong Sing Kung Cho Tong, ed., *A Brief Record of Hong Kong's Guangcheng Temple* (港堂廣成宮事略) (1961), pp. 5-7.
- ¹⁹ Hong Kong Sing Kung Cho Tong, ed., *A Brief Record of Hong Kong's Kwong Shing Gong* (港堂廣成宮事略), pp. 1-2.
- ²⁰ Hong Kong Sing Kung Cho Tong, ed., *A Brief Record of Hong Kong's Kwong Shing Gong* (港堂廣成宮事略), pp. 7-9.
- ²¹ For the dates of celebrations for Sing Kung Cho Tong's gods, please refer to *Sayings of Master Guangcheng* (廣成仙師信語) (Hong Kong: Sing Kung Cho Tong, 1992, 2nd ed.), p. 10.
- ²² See Yau Chi On, ed., *A Hundred Year's Taoism: Taoism and Taoist Temples in Hong Kong* (道風百年), pp. 168-173, the section on Sing Kung Cho Tong.
- ²³ Siu Kwok Kin, Shum Sze, Man Cheuk Fei, eds., *A Tour of Ancient Sites on Hong Kong Island* (香港島訪古遊) (Hong Kong: Chunghwa Book Company, 1992), p. 37.
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- ²⁸ Interview with Cheung Ying Shun, 12 April 2008, at Sung Sum To Tak Tan.
- ²⁹ (Yau) Ching Miu, "Our Temple's Fifty Turbulent Years" (本社五十年的滄桑史), *Commemorative Issue on Yan Lo's Fiftieth Anniversary* (隱廬五十週年紀念刊) (Hong Kong: Yan Lo Buddhist Monastery, 1980), pp. 17-18.
- ³⁰ Taoist Wan Neng, "The Origins of Yan Lo" (本社的起源), in *Commemorative Issue on Yan Lo's Fiftieth Anniversary* (隱廬五十週年紀念刊), p. 16.
- ³¹ *Founding of Yan Lo Buddhist Monastery in Tai Po* (隱廬佛社重修大埔堂落成記), 1968, the inscription epitaph is located at Yan Lo's Tai Po Site in Kam Shan.



- ³² Man Tak Chi Sin Seh, *Qiao Yang Yu Shu* (樵陽玉書) (Hong Kong: Man Tak Chi Sin Seh, 1957), p. 2.
- ³³ Interview with Master Choi Hiu and Yip Tung, 8 May 2008.
- ³⁴ For divine portraits painted by Master Choi Hiu (also known as Sung King), see Choi Sung King, ed., *Divine Art: Collection of Confucian, Buddhist and Taoist Artistic Masterpieces* (道裏仙風：三教文化藝術搜神集) (Hong Kong: Evergreen Taoism Society Limited, 2007).
- ³⁵ Information regarding the year(s) of construction of Man Tak Yuen is largely based on interviews. Information on the site's architectural layout has been drawn from Chu Kwun Chun, ed., *A Jewel in the Depths of the Mountains: Man Tak Yuen, Hong Kong's Heavenly Paradise* (養在深山人未識：香港的世外桃源——萬德苑) (Hong Kong: Man Tak Yuen, year of publication unknown), pp. 30-31.
- ³⁶ Interview with Master Poon Ka Lai, 21 April 2008.
- ³⁷ Man Tak Chi Sin Seh, ed., *Special Issue Commemorating Man Tak Yuen's Lunar New Year Prayer of Blessing Fair* (萬德至善社林村萬德苑新春祈福大會特刊) (Hong Kong: Man Tak Chi Sin Seh, 2001).
- ³⁸ Chan Tsz Shek, "The Past and Future of Lo Fung Academy" (本院過去與未來), *New Year Special Issue, Lo Fung Spiritual Practice Institute* (鐘峰精神修養學院新年特刊) (Hong Kong: Lo Fung Spiritual Practice Institute, 1958), p. 6.
- ³⁹ Interview with Master Lai Tsz Hing, 23 April 2008. Master Lai Tsz Hing was the disciple of Chan Tsz Shek. He was born in 1921 and became Chan's follower when he was a little older than thirty. His Taoist name is Ting Tsz. He still worships the portraits of the San Yang Masters at his home.
- ⁴⁰ Chan Tsz Shek has authored over 100 books, many of which are on Taoism, such as *Expressions of Lu Tsu* (呂祖口訣), *The Secret of Life* (一孔竅), *The Life Extension Mirror* (延命鏡), *The Book of Long Life* (長生集), *On life* (性命篇), etc. A list of Chan's books can be found on the back cover of *Expressions of Lu Tsu* (呂祖口訣) (Hong Kong: Lo Fung Taoist Publishing, 1953).
- ⁴¹ For details, see Chan Tsz Shek, "A Quick Tour of Lo Fung's Blessed Land" (鐘峰聖地小遊記); also Chan Tsz Shek, ed., *The Heavenly To Yuen* (桃源仙境) (Hong Kong: Lo Fung Spiritual Practice Institute, 1969).
- ⁴² See Chan Tsz Shek, ed., *The Heavenly To Yuen* (桃源仙境), photograph on the back cover.
- ⁴³ See report in the *Overseas Chinese Daily* (華僑日報), 14 January 1963.
- ⁴⁴ Chan Tsz Shek, ed., *Commemoration of Master Sit To Kwong by Lo Fung Spiritual Practice Institute* (鐘峰精神修養學院薛道光祖師紀念刊).
- ⁴⁵ Chan Tsz Shek, ed., *Brief Records of the Construction of the Spiritual Practice Institute by Lo Fung Academy* (鐘峰學院籌建精神修養院簡章), in Names of Officials for the Construction of the Spiritual Practice Institute of Lo Fung Academy (1961), p. 6. There were a total of eighty disciples under the Chan Tsz Shek School, who all had Taoist names starting with the character "Ting" ("Ding" in Putonghua).
- ⁴⁶ Yu Lingbo, "Master Hairen" (海仁法師) (<http://www.china2551.org/Article/gafj/r/200712/2609.html>).
- ⁴⁷ Elder Wing Sing, ed., *Buddhist Worship Sites in Hong Kong* (香江梵宇) (Hong Kong: Editorial Board of Buddhist Worship Sites in Hong Kong, 1999).
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- ⁴⁹ Ng Tai Lap, *A Brief Biography of Monk Master Zengxiu* (增秀老和尚傳略) (Hong Kong: Buddhist Committee of Ting Wai Monastery of Tai Po, 1948).
- ⁵⁰ Inscription of the Grand Opening of Ting Wai Monastery's Renovation and Its 70th Anniversary (定慧寺佛殿重修落成暨建寺七十年紀念碑記), the Inscription Epitaph is found inside the Main Shrine.
- ⁵¹ Ng Tai Lap, *A Brief Biography of Monk Master Zengxiu* (增秀老和尚傳略).
- ⁵² Ng Tai Lap, *A Brief Biography of Monk Master Zengxiu* (增秀老和尚傳略).
- ⁵³ Ng Tai Lap, *A Brief Biography of Monk Master Zengxiu* (增秀老和尚傳略).
- ⁵⁴ Ng Tai Lap, *A Brief Biography of Monk Master Zengxiu* (增秀老和尚傳略).
- ⁵⁵ Ng Tai Lap, *A Brief Biography of Monk Master Zengxiu* (增秀老和尚傳略).
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- ⁶² Master Chuk Mo, "Beginning with the Visit of Tai Kwong School" (從參觀大光學校說起).
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- ⁶⁵ Master Chuk Mo, "Beginning with the Visit of Tai Kwong School" (從參觀大光學校說起).
- ⁶⁶ Elder Wing Sing, ed., *Buddhist Monasteries in Hong Kong* (香江梵宇), p. 241.
- ⁶⁷ Wong Siu Wai, "Letter to Master Yinguang by Lay Buddhist Wong Siu Wai" (黃德煒居士上印公法師書), in Master Yinguang, *Pure Land Essentials (II) Footnote: Deeds of Bodhisattva Kok Ming Miu Hang and Bodhisattva Tata* (淨土輯要(下篇)·附錄：覺明妙行菩薩及哆婆娑呵菩薩應化事迹) (Taipei: the Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation, 2001).
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