

Historic Building Appraisal
Yuk Hui Temple, Temple of God of Wealth
2 Lung On Street, Wan Chai

Yuk Hui Temple (玉虛宮) in Wan Chai was erected by local residents in 1863 for the worship of the Taoist deity Pak Tai (北帝), Emperor of the North, also known as Yuen Tin Sheung Tai (玄天上帝), the Supreme Emperor of the Dark Heaven. Pak Tai was a brave warrior who had once defeated the Demon King (魔王) of the Shang (商) dynasty. The deity was very much worshipped by the fishermen but has become less popular after the World War II. It was initially kept by a Kaifong Worship Committee in Wan Chai and later managed by the Chinese Temples Committee.

*Historical
Interest*

It is a Qing vernacular temple with its main deity halls in the middle. Two side chambers for other deities, keeper's quarters, incense burners and light-wells are on its left and right. Right in front of the main building is a raised platform accessed by a granite staircase. The main building is a two-hall building separated by a covered courtyard in between having the Pak Tai statue right in front of the end hall and another statue of his at the altars at the very end of the hall accompanied by other deities including Kwun Yam (觀音), Kwan Tai (關帝), Lui Cho (呂祖) and others.

*Architectural
Merit*

Connected to the left of the Yuk Hui Temple is a Hall of Dragon Mother (龍母殿) and a Hall of God of Wealth (財神殿) and to its right a Hall of Three Treasures (三寶殿) and the keeper's quarters which are probably later additions.

The roofs of all the buildings are in flush gable (硬山頂) style except that of the covered courtyard in hip-and-gable (歇山頂) style. The ceramic ridge decorations including a pair of dragon, a firing pearl, two aoyus (鰲魚, dragon fish), figurines of Chinese opera, floral patterns, etc. made by a Shiwan kiln dated 1907 are still kept in good condition. The granite columns and the wooden brackets are elegantly engraved with ornate carvings. Its statues including the four Tin Wongs (天王, heavenly kings) are exquisitely carved in tradition style.

It is one of the biggest temples on Hong Kong Island and one of the two biggest Yuk Hui temples (the other is the Yuk Hui Temple in Cheung Chau) in Hong Kong. Though it is not the oldest Yuk Hui temple in Hong Kong, it is the best maintained one having the highest built heritage value.

*Rarity & Built
Heritage Value*

Though numerous repairs have been carried out throughout the years with only some recorded in 1870, 1884, 1897, 1907 and 1994, the temple is kept in

Authenticity

good condition with its structures, fixtures and relics well maintained without losing their authenticity.

The temple is highly celebrated by worshippers on the 3rd day of the third lunar month, the birthday of the deity. Lung Mo's (龍母), another deity at the side chamber, will also be celebrated on the 8th day of the fifth lunar month. Also at the Awakening from Hibernation Festival (驚蟄) and on days at the Chinese year end and beginning of the new year, the temple is crowded with worshippers seeking blessings from the deities.

*Social Value &
Local Interest*