

Historic Building Appraisal
Yuk Hui Temple
Pak She Street, Tung Wan, Cheung Chau

Yuk Hui Temple (玉虛宮) is a Taoist temple built in 1783 for the worship of Yuen Tin Sheung Tai (玄天上帝), the Supreme Emperor of Dark Heaven or Pak Tai (北帝), Emperor of the North. The Emperor is known for his supreme power to combat demons in the Taoist stories. The temple is therefore also known as Pak Tai Temple. It is said that a plague broke out in 1777 on Cheung Chau Island killing many people that a number of Huizhou (惠州) and Chaozhou (潮州) natives of the island carried an image of the deity from their home county to Cheung Chau to suppress the plague. Health and prosperity were brought to the island. Six years later a Lam Yuk-Mo (林煜武) was appointed to build a Pak Tai temple on the eastern shore of the island with donations from the fishermen and villagers. The temple has been managed by the Chinese Temples Committee since 1929.

**Historical
Interest**

The Taoist temple is a Qing vernacular building. The two-hall main building in the middle houses the deity at its end hall with two side chambers to its right and left. The main building and the chambers are separated by two lanes. Its façade is fronted by a porch with two platforms at both ends. The granite columns of the porch and the two pairs of lions and the incense burner at the open courtyard are unique features of the temple. The building has a most distinguished cat-crawling (貓拱式) type of gable walls. Its ceramic Shiwan (石灣) ridge decorations are famous among the temples in the territory.

**Architectural
Merit**

No other Yuk Hui temples in Hong Kong can compete with this highly patronized temple. It is one of the few Yuk Hui temples in Hong Kong to demonstrate the kind of Taoist temples in terms of their age, type, size and features.

**Rarity &
Built
Heritage
Value**

The building has undergone several renovations in 1822, 1838, 1858, 1903 and the latest in 2002. The last one was a very unauthentic one putting up yellow tiles for its roofs, adding dragons and other decorations on the ridges and others.

Authenticity

The temple is much celebrated on the birthday of Pak Tai on each 3rd day of the third lunar month. However the temple is even more featured at the most well-known event throughout the year of the island, that is, at the Bun Festival in the 4th month of the lunar year. The festival to hold the Tai Ping Ching Chiu (太平清醮) rituals in order to ward off the evils has the Pak Tai statue from the temple sitting on his sedan chair to be carried forward right in front of the parade on the island to start off the beginning of the festival. It has become one of the most popular festivals much

**Social Value
& Local
Interest**

welcome by the tourists and Hong Kong people rather than just a local one for the islanders only.