

# SHUANG LIN MONASTERY



1999 AWARD

**Owner:**

*Lian Shan Shuang Lin Monastery*

**Architect:**

*RSP Architects Planners & Engineers (Pte) Ltd*

**Engineer:**

*RSP Architects Planners & Engineers (Pte) Ltd*

**Contractor:**

*LAEC Construction Pte Ltd*

The buildings original to the Shuang Lin Monastery, previously called the Siong Lim Temple, are the Tian Wang Dian and the Da Xiong Bao Dian which were constructed in 1902 in the traditional Chinese “Min Nan” architectural style.



*Da Xiong Bao Dian restored to original splendour*

Gazetted as a national monument in 1980, the two buildings had over the years undergone several major repairs to keep them in good stead. Outstanding effort was made to research into the original records of the buildings. Verification of the original building design was done by the Beijing Cultural Board Research Unit and professional expert advice obtained from the Tian Jin and Hua Qiao Universities. Archival photographs were also used in determining the design of the original buildings.

Prior to restoration, the buildings were in poor condition due to termite infestation and structural

problems. Before commencement of works on site, every piece of timber element was inventorised before it was taken down for restoration. The roofs of the buildings were temporarily covered and made water tight

during the restoration period. Chinese craftsmen from Quan Zhou, Fujian Province of China, were engaged to carry out the restoration works. Materials, especially stone, were obtained from China. Carving works on both stone and timber elements followed the “Min Nan” style. Specialists from Hong Kong were engaged to do the gold gilding works. Material specialist was engaged to ensure the suitability and durability of the materials used.

The final result is a monument restored to its finest details and following its original “Min Nan” architectural style of construction.



Restored ceramic ornament at roof ridge



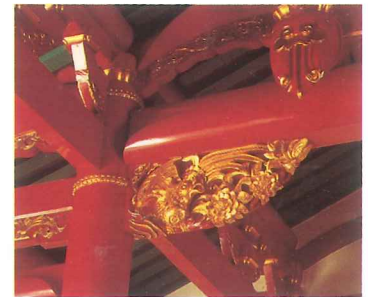
Swallow tail ridge restored



Hip roof to Da Xiong Bao Dian



Restored ceiling at Da Xiong Bao Dian



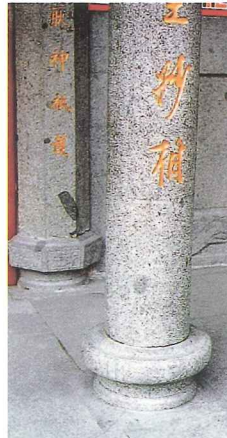
Carved timber bracket



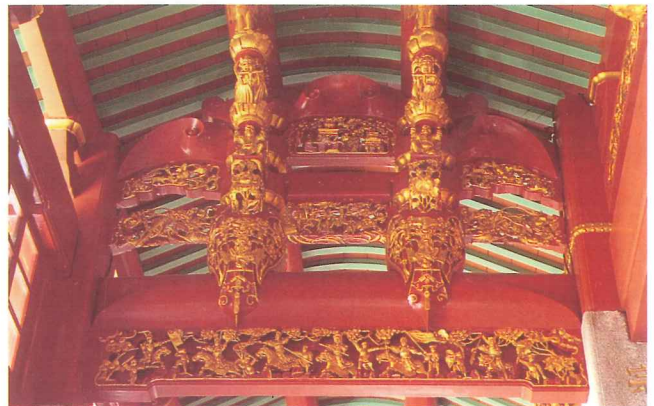
Double-leafed doors with perforated top panel and carved lower panel



Circular window openings with green bamboo grills on granite wall



Chinese characters on granite column retained and restored



Carved timber beams complete with gold gilding works



Decorative timber element



Timber hanging post

In the late 19th Century, the wealthy Chinese businessman, Mr. Low Kim Pong, donated the present day site for the construction of Lian Shan Shuang Lin Monastery, previously called Siong Lim Temple.

Headed by Rev. Xian Hui, the construction was undertaken in 1898 and over an 11 year period completed in 1909.

#### LAYOUT

Shuang Lin Monastery has been strongly influenced by the affiliated monastery in China, Fu Zhou's Xi Chan Si.

An example of this being the 3 main temples, Tian Wang Dian, Da Xiong Bao Dian and Fa Tang being constructed around a North-South axis in an ascending order of hierarchy.

#### BUILDING STYLE AND MATERIALS

The buildings were generally constructed of stone, timber and brick, the stone being imported from Fu Zhou.

Utilising the construction expertise of the craftsmen from Fu Zhou, Zhang Zhou and Hui Ann regions, the building was erected using the ' Min Nan ' construction style.

#### REPAIR AND RECONSTRUCTION

During the last century, the buildings underwent 3 major repair and reconstruction work, in which time several areas were rebuilt, unfortunately deviating from the original style.

#### RECOGNITION

In view of Shuang Lin Monastery's historical and architectural value, in 1980, it was listed as a National Monument.