

蓮山雙林寺

Lian Shan Shuang Lin Monastery



45. 蓮山雙林寺 Lianshan Shuanglin Si Lian Shan Shuang Lin Monastery The Lotus Mountain Double Grove Monastery

45.1. Brief Introduction to the Monastery 佛寺簡介



蓮山雙林寺 (正門)
Lian Shan Shuang Lin Monastery

Lian Shan Shuang Lin Monastery is located along Kim Keat Link in Toa Payoh. The monastery was built in 1898. This is the first Buddhist monastery of Singapore, and the temple includes the full range of monastic buildings, and contains many examples of Buddhist art. With its even and balanced courtyards, the monastery is a fine example of traditional Fujian architecture. The origins of the monastery can be found in the *Minor Record of the Western Chan Monastery*, printed in the ancestral temple back in Yishan, Fuzhou. According to this source, there was a family of 12 surnamed Xiao living in Hui'an county of Quanzhou, all of whom were vegetarians. When the sons of the family grew older, they wished to “leave their family” and become ordained as Buddhist monks. Not only did their parents agree, they also made a vow and built the Qingyin (Clear Sound) monastery and the Qingde An (Pure Virtue Monastery), enabling the men and women to live separately in tranquility. In 1887, the entire family entered the Buddhist faith through the auspices of the Abbot of the Western Chan Monastery, Abbot Weimiao. The eldest son, named Xianhui, and his brother Xinghui, were the immediate successors of the Yishan Linji Chan Lineage. In 1892, the two monks, Xianhui and Xinghui, together with their mother, Buddhist Nun Cimiao, their sister, Nun Chanhui and their cousin Nun Yueguang – in total 12 people – traveled on a pilgrimage to India. Their boat continued on to Sri Lanka, where they practiced meditation and self-cultivation for six years on Mount Lañkā. After descending from this mountain retreat, they went to Burma to spread the

Dharma. In 1898, they prepared to return to China, and then travel to Penang, Malacca, and Singapore. Just at that moment, Low Kim Pong (1837-1909), a leader of the Hokkien dialect community, and his son both dreamt of golden men coming from the West, and awaited them at the pier. When he saw Master Xianhui and the others, he believed that they were the figures foretold in his dream. He invited them to accept his offer of worship. He generously donated land and invited skilled craftsmen, carpenters, masons, painters and carvers from Hokkien, who were asked to imitate the form and style of the Western Chan Monastery in Fuzhou. Master Xianhui was invited to serve as the abbot. That same year Low Kim Pong prepared the site and built the Zhulin An (Pearl and Jade Nunnery), to provide a place for the nuns in the family. Sadly Masters Xianhui and Xinghui passed away one after the other in 1901 and 1902. It proved impossible for their mother, Nun Cimiao, to remain in Singapore. Therefore she transferred control of the monastery over to Master Mingguang, and then took her remaining family members back to Fujian. Before leaving she erected a stele entitled “*The Origins of the Lotus Mountain Double Grove Monastery*” in which she recounted the history of the monastery. In 1903, the members of the monastery board of managers published an announcement of a contribution drive to complete construction of the monastery in the *Lepao (Singapore Newspaper)*, requesting additional assistance from local and foreign supporters. In 1904 they began work and in 1907 completed the construction of the Main Hall (Hall of the Great Treasures), as well as other halls including the Hall of the Heavenly Kings, the Drum and Bell Towers, the Mountain Gate, the rooms along the corridors, the kitchens, the guest house, the Qielan Hall, the Hall of the Ancestral Masters, the Abbots Quarters, and the Chan Meditation Hall. All this construction was completed by 1909, when the monastery was in magnificent shape. Since the artisans came from different regions including Minnan, Mindong, Hui’an and Chaozhou, each was able to contribute their own traditional craft to the project. This led to an overall monastic complex which mixes several regional styles, creating an unique ensemble. This vast construction project took over 11 years to complete, at a cost of over 500,000 Singapore dollars. In 1918, the beams and rafters of the monastery began to show signs of decay, and the towers became damaged. Abbot Puguang advocated for a restoration project, and he received support from the son of Low Kim Pong and Liu Qixiang. Two years later, after the completion of the repairs, he composed the stele entitled *Stele record of the restoration of the Lotus Mountain Double Grove Monastery*. In 1950, another restoration project was carried out at a cost of over \$100,000. In the 1970s, due to an infestation of termites, the temple structures were seriously damaged. Many rafters were hollowed out by termite damage, and the monastic buildings were in peril. The government building regulatory agencies issued official warnings, forbidding visitors from entering damaged buildings. Because much of the original buildings were lost in earlier repair operations, in 1991 a plan to “Restore the original monastery” was initiated by the current serving Abbot Wei Yan. When this plan was adopted, at the recommendation of the Taigu Construction Company architectural consultants, Chinese craftsmen from Fujian were invited to use the best craft techniques available to restore the fine quality of the woodwork in the temple. This project was begun in 1991, and was completed in 2002. The monastery was renewed and restored to its former magnificence. In 2016 Abbot Wai Yim completed another major restoration of the monastery. The name Shuanglin (lit. Double Grove) refers to the two sāla trees (one verdant and the other withered) between which the Buddha entered nirvana. Thus another possible translation of the name of the monastery would be the Twin Tree Monastery.

蓮山雙林寺，座落於大芭窰金吉徑，創建於清光緒廿四年（1898）。這是新加坡佛教叢林首刹，寺院有完整的叢林建築群與瑰偉的佛教藝術，加上四合院格局，構成典型的閩南佛寺。這座叢林的創建因緣，可從祖庭中國福建福州怡山西禪寺所印行的《西禪小記》文獻探知。據悉，福建泉州惠安有蕭姓家族 12 人，全家茹素。蕭家兄弟年紀稍長即欲出家，父母不但答應，還斥資創建“清音寺”和“清德庵”，讓男女分別居住靜修。1887 年，全家禮拜西禪寺住持微妙法師出家，兄即賢慧，弟名性慧，為禪宗臨濟怡山派傳人。1892 年，賢慧、性慧二師與母慈妙法師、妹禪慧法師及表妹月光法師等共 12 人赴印度朝聖，航行到錫蘭，在楞伽山修道六年，出山後到緬甸弘法。1898 年準備回國，取道檳城、馬六甲海峽，路經新加坡。正巧新加坡福建幫領袖劉金榜父子夢見金人西來，到海邊等待，看見賢慧法師等人，疑是夢中金人出現，便迎請回去供養，並慨然獻地，聘請中國巧匠，仿西禪寺格局興建雙林寺，禮請賢慧法師任開山住持。劉金榜於是年置地，先建珠琳庵，以安尼眾。可惜賢慧、性慧二師在 1901 年（辛丑年）和 1902 年（壬寅年）相繼圓寂，慈妙法師不便久留，於是將寺務交托明光法師，攜家人回返中國，臨行立碑《蓮山雙林禪寺緣起》，敘述創寺緣由。1903 年，董事們在《叻報》刊登募款通告，建寺計劃得到海內外華人的支持。1904 年動工，1907 年大雄寶殿落成，其他殿堂如天王殿、鐘鼓樓、山門、廊廡、廂房、上客堂、伽藍殿、祖師殿、方丈室與禪堂相繼完工，至 1909 年整體建竣，殿宇恢宏。由於工匠來自閩南、閩東、惠安、潮州等地區，施工時都發揮自家的傳統技巧，致使一座佛寺融合了多樣式的建築風格，誠屬罕見。這項浩大工程歷時 11 年，耗資叻幣近 50 萬元。1918 年，寺院棟梁開始蛀腐，樓閣破損，普亮法師建議重修，獲劉金榜居士之子劉啟祥等善信的支持。兩年後修葺完成，勒石《重修蓮山雙林禪寺碑記》紀念。1950 年，再次發起募捐重建雙林寺計劃，維修費達十餘萬元。70 年代，雙林寺因白蟻為患，嚴重蛀蝕木構建築，許多斗樑呈現中空，殿堂結構岌岌可危。政府單位建築管制處發函，禁止公眾參觀有危樓傾向的殿堂。由於雙林寺的原貌在多次修葺中逐漸消失，故於 1991 年成立“復原委員會”，由現任方丈惟儼法師任主席，採納中國古建築專家的專業見解，聘請中國福建匠師，以精湛雕藝再現木構件的精髓。始於 1991 年的復原計劃，2002 年終於圓成，古寺新貌，寶剎莊嚴。（欲知更多詳情，請見釋能度等編《蓮山雙林寺》，2001 年）



蓮山雙林寺（山門）