

Deciphering Chinese Calligraphy as the Architectural Essence of Tao Fong Shan Christian Center in Hong Kong

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Abstract : Many buildings in Hong Kong are graced with enchanting works of Chinese calligraphy. An excellent example is Tao Fong Shan Christian Center founded by a Norwegian missionary, Karl Ludvig Reichelt (1877-1952) in 1930. Adorned with many inspiring works of Chinese calligraphy, the center functions as a place for the study of Christianity where people of different religions can meet to have religious discussions and intellectual exchanges. This paper examines the pivotal role played by Chinese calligraphy in creating a significant context for the center to fulfill her visions and missions. The methodology of this research involves stylistic and textual analyses of works of calligraphy, in particular through an examination and interpretation of their extended meanings in terms of architectural symbology and social and cultural contexts. Findings showed that Chinese calligraphy was effectively used as a powerful vehicle for a purposeful development of contextual Christian spirituality in Hong Kong.

Keywords : Chinese calligraphy, Hong Kong architecture, Hong Kong calligraphy, Johannes Prip-Møller, Karl Ludvig Reichelt, Norwegian missionary, Tao Fong Shan Christian Center, traditional Chinese architecture

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