

Historic Building Appraisal
Sam Tai Tsz Temple
Nos. 196 & 198 Yu Chau Street, Sham Shui Po

Sam Tai Tsz Temple (三太子宮) in Yu Chau Street (汝州街) of Sham Shui Po (深水埗) was erected in the 24th year of the Guangxu (光緒, 1898) reign of the Qing (清) dynasty by a group of Hakka (客家) people in the area after a plague occurred in 1894 in Hong Kong. The plague killed a lot of inhabitants that the Hakkas brought a statue of Sam Tai Tsz (三太子) from their Huizhou (惠州) home to Sham Shui Po. A parade was arranged throughout the streets of the area and the plague was then subsided. They believed it was the divine power of the deity and a temple was constructed for the worship of him. The temple was first managed by a committee of the Hakkas and later by the Chinese Temples Committee (華人廟宇委員會) since 1931. Sam Tai Tsz, also known as Na Cha (哪吒) and son of Li Jing (李靖), is a legendary naughty kid with mighty powers and talents who killed the third son of the Dragon King of the Seas (海龍王). He was killed but reincarnated with the help of his master Tai Yuet Chun Yan (太乙真人). A Pak Tai Temple (北帝宮) was later constructed on its left in 1920.

**Historical
Interest**

The temple is a Qing vernacular building of a two-hall-one-courtyard plan of three bays. The building is constructed of grey brickwork with its walls and columns to support its pitched roofs of timber rafters, purlins and tiles. The courtyard between the entrance and main halls has been covered. A side platform is on either side of the temple entrance supported by two granite columns with a bracket system. Above the granite doorframe is the name of the temple engraved on the lintel. The granite building fabric bear delicate carvings. A forecourt is in front of the temple with a furnace and a shrine of the Earth God (土地). The courtyard is surrounded by a red-brick low boundary wall with columns for its two entrances. The columns and wall are topped with green ceramic roofs. The wall is also decorated with green glazed bamboo-shaped balustrades for decoration. The main altar at the rear hall houses the statue of Sam Tai Tsz. The statues of Kwun Yam (觀音) and Pau Kung (包公) are respectively on the right and left side altars. The roofs of the temple have been covered with green glazed tiles. Its main ridge is decorated with a set of ceramic “Two Dragons Competing for a Pearl” (二龍爭珠) with a pair of dragon fish locally known as *aoyus* (鰲魚).

**Architectural
Merit**

It is the only historic temple mainly dedicated to Sam Tai Tsz in Hong Kong. It is a temple solely erected for the overcome of the plague which started in 1894, and has considerable built heritage value. However, the temple has been

**Rarity, Built
Heritage
Value &**

partially renovated with modern materials.

Authenticity

Apart from the adjoining Pak Tai Temple (北帝宮), the Sam Tai Tsz Temple is within walking distance of other historic buildings, including Nos. 269 & 271 Yu Chau Street (汝州街, Grade 3), Sham Shui Po Police Station (深水埗警署, Grade 2) and Nos. 117, 119, 121, 123 & 125 Nam Cheong Street (南昌街, Grade 3).

Group Value

Other than Sam Tai Tsz, other deities including Kwun Yam, Pau Kung, Tai Sui (太歲) and Lady Kam Fa (金花娘娘) are also worshipped in the temple. The birthday of Sam Tai Tsz is celebrated on the 18th of the third lunar month.

*Social Value,
& Local Interest*