

Historic Building Appraisal

Shui Yuet Kung,

Ha Wai, Tap Mun, Tai Po, N.T.

The compound of Shui Yuet Kung (水月宮) in Tap Mun (塔門) island was erected by Hakka (客家) fishermen on the island for the worship of Tin Hau. The temple was built around the 2nd year of Qianlong reign (乾隆, A.D. 1737) of the Qing dynasty. Its construction was initiated by a government official named Wu Man-shou (胡文壽). To the right end a chamber, Kwan Tai Kung (關帝宮), was built later for the worship of the deity who, a legendary general in the Three Kingdoms period (三國, 220-265), is a symbol of bravery, loyalty and righteousness. A renovation plaque shows that the temple was repaired as early as in the 1st year of Jiajing reign (嘉慶, 1796) of the Qing dynasty. It was also recorded that villagers named Tsui Shiu-fan (徐紹勳) and Yip Ngong-sun (葉昂申) had donation of farmland made to the temple in the 8th year of Qianlong reign (1743) of the Qing dynasty.

**Historical
Interest**

Shui Yuet Kung (水月宮) was built in the 53rd year of the Qianlong reign (乾隆 1788) as its cloud gong has the dating engraved on it. The temple was first built on a hill facing Tap Mun and later moved to the present site for easy worship by villagers of the island. The temple is for the worship of Kwun Yam (觀音), Goddess of Mercy who has the image of sitting on a lotus above the water. It is that her temple is called Shui (water) Yuet (moon) Kung (temple). Besides Kwun Yam, the Earth God (土地) is also worshipped in the temple.

It is a relatively small temple compared with the Tin Hau Temple to its right. It is a one-hall building in rectangular plan. Right in the far end of the hall is the altar housing the deity's statue for worship. Its roof is composed of rafters and purlins with tiles on top. The floors are finished with Canton tiles. The wall paintings on its façade friezes are calligraphy, flowers-and-plants and figures. The fascia board above is with flowers-and-birds pattern.

**Architectural
Merit**

It is a temple to witness the historical development of Tap Mun in the north-eastern part of Hong Kong.

Rarity

It is a temple with considerable built heritage value. Numerous renovations have been carried out to the temple, the last one being in 1992. The external walls have been plastered and the roof replaced with green glazed tiles which moderately affect the authenticity of the building.

**Built Heritage
Value &
Authenticity**

Shui Yuet Kung and Tin Hau Temple (to its right) have their indivisible *Group Value* group value.

Several commemorative days are celebrated for Kwun Yam's blessings, but her birthday on the 19th day on the second lunar month is the most important. *Social Value, & Local Interest*
Also the 26th day of the first lunar month, known as her Treasure Open Day (觀音借庫), has been most welcome by worshippers wishing to borrow wealth from the deity.