

Historic Building Appraisal

Tin Hau Temple

Ha Wai, Tap Mun, Tai Po

Tin Hau Temple (天后古廟) in Tap Mun (塔門) island was built probably in the 2nd year of Qianlong reign (乾隆, 1737) of the Qing dynasty by an official Wu Man-shou (胡文壽) without any construction record. It was erected by the Hakka (客家) fishermen on the island for the worship of Tin Hau. To the right end a chamber, Kwan Tai Kung (關帝宮), was built later for the worship of the deity who, a legendarily 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 first year of Jiaqing reign (嘉慶, 1796). It was also recorded 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).

**Historical
Interest**

The sea-facing temple on the west coast of Tap Mun is a two-hall building with an open courtyard in between. The Kwan Tai annex was built later to its right and another annex to the left. They are in Qing vernacular design having pitched roofs and green brick walls in symmetrical plan. The temple is highly ornated with elegant ceramic Shiwan (石灣) opera figurines, a pearl, two *aoyus* (鰲魚) and geometric patterns. Its plastered mouldings and wall paintings on its wall and gable friezes are as well of merit craftsmanship.

**Architectural
Merit**

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

Rarity

It is a temple with built heritage value, having been renovated in recent times.

**Built Heritage
Value,
Authenticity &
Group Value**

Shui Yuet Kung (水月宮) temple, a separate one to its left, and this temple have their indivisible group value

Tin Hau Festival (天后誕) on the 23rd of the third lunar month will be highly celebrated by the Tap Mun residents but not on Kwan Tai Festival (關帝誕). Fa Pow (花炮) lucky draw will be held. Tai Ping Ching Chiu (太平清醮) held every ten years would be celebrated with Cantonese opera performances, puppet shows and vegetarian meals.

**Social Value,
& Local
Interest**