

**Heritage Appraisal of Hau Wong Temple Compound**  
**Corner of Junction Road and Tung Tau Tsuen Road, Kowloon City**

The exact construction year of the Hau Wong Temple (侯王古廟) in Kowloon City is not known. The oldest relic of the temple is an iron bell cast in the 8<sup>th</sup> year of Yongzheng (雍正) reign (1730) of the Qing dynasty (清朝) dedicated to the deity of Yeung Hau Tai Wong (楊侯大王)<sup>1</sup>. It was believed that the temple was probably built in 1730 or earlier.

***Historical  
Interest***

Hau Wong Temple was situated at the foot of a hill, namely Pak Hok Shan (白鶴山) (literally means a hill of white crane). In the past, the main access road to Hau Wong Temple was a granite road namely “Temple Road” (廟道) from the West Gate of Kowloon Walled City (九龍寨城)<sup>2</sup>. The granite road was destroyed during the Japanese Occupation Period (1941 to 1945). The temple was taken over by the Chinese Temples Committee in 1928.

Hau Wong Temple was patronized by the Qing officials and soldiers when Kowloon Walled City (located south of the temple) was in existence guarding the territory between 1847 and 1899. A stone tablet of the temple engraved in the 9<sup>th</sup> year of Xianfeng (咸豐) reign (1859) indicated the contribution of the officials from the office of the Assistant Magistrate of Kowloon (九龍巡政廳) and Dapeng Brigade (大鵬協) to the renovation of the temple. Other

---

<sup>1</sup> The origin of Hau Wong Temple cannot be ascertained. Some believe that Yeung Hau (楊侯) was Yang Liangjie (楊亮節), a loyal follower and a marquis of the last emperors of the Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279) who fled with the royal family to Kowloon driven by the Mongols. It was said that the temple was built to commemorate his bravery and loyalty. There is another legend alleging that the temple in Kowloon City was dedicated to a local inhabitant surnamed Yeung who cured the Song emperor of an illness. Other believe that the temple, like other temples dedicated to Hau Wong or Yeung Hau in Hong Kong and around the Pearl River, was built to commemorate the bravery and loyalty of a marquis, but not particular Yang Liangjie.

<sup>2</sup> With the growing importance of the area to the coastal defense of the region after the British occupation of Hong Kong Island in 1841, the Qing court constructed a walled garrison-city between 25 November 1846 and 31 May 1847, i.e. the Kowloon Walled City. The offices of the Commodore of the Dapeng Brigade (大鵬協副將), and the Assistant Military Inspectorate of Kowloon (九龍巡檢司) were also set up in the walled city. There were 150 soldiers stationed in the walled city at the time of its completion and the troops increased subsequently to more than 500 in 1898/99. The Qing officials still continued to station in the walled city after the lease of the New Territories to the British in 1898. However, British troops were sent to take over the walled city in 1899, and the Qing officials and soldiers were expelled.

relics like an old incense burner and a number of timber plaques dedicated by the military officials in the Kowloon Walled City between 1847 and 1888, such as Xu Wenshen (許文深)<sup>3</sup>, the first Assistant Military Magistrate of Kowloon (九龍巡檢司), can still be found in the temple. It is also worth mentioning that there was a plaque of 1866 donated by Zhang Yutang (張玉堂), the then Commodore of the Dapeng Brigade (大鵬協副將), to the temple indicating his gratitude to the deity of Hau Wong for blessing him in winning a battle in the Opium War with the British, and also giving protection for the peace of the area during his term as the commodore.

There are still many stone tablets, couplets and plaques bearing inscriptions of calligraphy by famous scholars kept in the temple. The most famous ones are the stone inscriptions of “鵝” (goose) and “鶴” (crane) dated 1887 and 1888 respectively. The former was unfortunately destroyed during the Japanese Occupation while the later can still be viewed at the back of the main temple building. An imitation of the inscription of “鵝” was made in 1970 and displayed in a pavilion at the eastern corner of the temple complex.

The temple compound consists of the main temple building with later added side chambers, pavilions and stone inscriptions all standing on a terrace with granite steps leading to the ground level. The main temple building is originally a two-hall-one-courtyard Chinese vernacular building with pitched roofs. A detached pavilion with hip-and-gable roof supported by fine granite columns and wooden brackets is awkwardly standing in front of it. Altars are placed in the rear hall of the main temple building where Hau Wong and other deities such as Kwun Yam are worshipped. The stepped gables of the rear hall in the style of “五岳朝天” (literally means five peaks paying tribute to heaven) is a very rare design seldom found in Hong Kong<sup>4</sup>.

***Architectural Merit***

---

<sup>3</sup> Xu Wen-shen was the first Assistant Military Inspectorate of Kowloon in 1847 and he also contributed to the establishment of Lung Chun Free School (龍津義學) in 1847 in the Kowloon Walled City.

<sup>4</sup> According to the AMO's records, there are only two historic buildings with such kind of stepped gables, i.e. Hau Wong Temple (Grade 1) in Kowloon City and Lo Pan Temple (Grade 1) in Kennedy Town.

Side chambers which was later added to the right of the main temple building for housing statutes of other deities and keeper's quarters are decorated with exquisite Shiwan (石灣) ceramic figurines.

According to the remaining stone tablets, Hau Wong Temple underwent major renovations in 1822, 1859, 1879, 1917, 1988 and 2005. Although internal refurbishment and alterations have been made over the years, the temple has generally retained much of its original authentic appearance, and most of the relics and historic ceramic figurines are still visible. ***Authenticity***

Apart from being one of the seven existing graded historic temples dedicated mainly to Hau Wong/Yeung Hau<sup>5</sup>, the Hau Wong Temple in Kowloon City is also one of the two historic temples with stepped gables in the style of “五岳朝天” in Hong Kong. Furthermore, there is no other temple in the territory still keeping such a rich collection of historic relics with direct relation with the garrison town of Kowloon Walled City. ***Rarity***

Celebrations are held annually on the 16<sup>th</sup> of the sixth lunar month to celebrate the birthday of Hau Wong. ***Social Value & Local Interest***

Hau Wong Temple together with other heritage sites in connection with the Kowloon Walled City, including Former Yamen Building (Declared Monument), Remnants of South Gate of Kowloon Walled City (Declared Monument), and Remains of Lung Tsun Stone Bridge (龍津橋遺址) in Kai Tak area, form a unique heritage cluster depicting not only the historical development of Kowloon City area, but also the coastal defense history of the Qing court against the British in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. ***Group Value***

---

<sup>5</sup> The other six graded historic temples dedicated mainly to Hau Wong or Yeung Hau are Yueng Hau Temple (楊侯宮) (Declared Monument) in Tung Tau Tsuen, Yuen Long; Yeung Hau Temple (楊侯古廟) (Grade 1) in Tai O, Lantau; Tai Wong Temple (大王古廟) (Grade 1) for Hung Shing Tai Wong and Yeung Hau Tai Wong in Yuen Long Kau Hui (元朗舊墟); Hau Wong Temple (侯王宮) (Grade 2) in Tung Chung, Lantau; Yeung Hau Temple (楊侯古廟) (Grade 3) in Sheung Cheung Wai, Ping Shan, Yuen Long; and Yeung Hau Temple (楊侯古廟) (Grade 3) in Tong Yan San Tsuen, Ping Shan, Yuen Long.