

Historic Building Appraisal
Lee Ancestral Hall
San Tau Kok, Tai Po, New Territories

San Tau Kok (磡頭角) is a Hakka (客家) multi-clan village on the northern shore of Plover Cove (船灣海), Tai Po. It was inhabited by the Sung (宋氏), the Tsangs (曾氏), the Chans (陳氏) and the Lees (李氏). The Sung were the earliest settlers of the village. Also, San Tau Kok is a member of Chap Wo Yeuk (集和約) which belonged to Tsat Yeuk (七約, literally, Seven Alliance). Tsat Yeuk was an inter-village alliance which formed Tai Wo Market (太和市) in 1892 to break the monopoly of the old Tai Po Market (大埔墟) formed by the Lung Yeuk Tau Tang clan (龍躍頭鄧氏). The villagers in San Tau Kok earned their livelihood by fishing and farming. Their harvest was usually for self-consumption while the surplus was sold to Tai Wo Market (太和市).

**Historical
Interest**

Originally from Dingzhou of Fujian province (福建汀州), the Lees moved to Baimanghua (白芒花) in Huizhou (惠州) of Guangdong province (廣東) at the end of Song (宋, 960-1279) Dynasty. Subsequently, a member of the Lees, Lee Tze-lin (李子蓮), moved from Huizhou to Wai Ha (圍下), west of San Tau Kok in the Daoguang (道光, 1821-1850) reign of Qing (清) Dynasty. Due to lack of arable land for cultivation, a group of the Lee clan later moved to San Tau Kok in the late Qing Dynasty (circa 1895-1911). The **Lee Ancestral Hall** (李氏宗祠) in the village was built around 100 years ago to replace the dilapidated one in Wai Ha. The ancestral hall is also called Lee Tze Lin Tong (李子蓮堂) to commemorate their founder.

Located in the middle of the back row of two rows of houses in the village, the **Lee Ancestral Hall** is connected to village houses on either side. It shares with them a common roof. It is a one-hall structure. It is a Qing vernacular building constructed of green bricks and mud bricks with its walls to support its pitched roof of timber rafters, purlins and clay tiles. The walls are plastered and the floor is with cement screeding. The painted red brick altar occupies the entire end wall of the hall housing a soul tablet in the middle for worship. A tie beam is carved with “百子千孫” (Hundreds of Sons and Thousands of Grandsons). The name of the ancestral hall is moulded on the wall above the lintel of the recessed entrance.

**Architectural
Merit**

It is an ancestral hall to witness the settlement of the Lees in San Tau Kok.

Rarity

It has some built heritage value.

***Built Heritage
Value***

The simple hall has its authenticity kept.

Authenticity

The Lees engaged themselves in fishing and farming activities. Their produce were sold at Tai Wo Market (太和市) in Tai Po. They also produced lime with the corals and shells collected from the Plover Cove. The lime was an ingredient of the mortar for the construction of village houses and used as a fertilizer. The ancestral hall has ancestral worship regularly and during the Chinese New Year and at festivals. Weddings and funerals were held at the ancestral hall other than ancestral worship. The hall was also used for serving banquets to the villagers. Matter concerning the common interest of the Lees would also be discussed and dealt with at the hall.

***Social Value,
& Local Interest***

It has group value with the Tsang Ancestral Hall (曾氏家祠) in the village. It is also close to historic buildings graded by the Antiquities Advisory Board, such as Mo Tai Temple (武帝宮) in the nearby Ting Kok Village and Ta Tit Yan Kwun Yum Temple (打鐵坳觀音宮). Other recorded items in the Antiquities and Monuments Office include Chan Ancestral Hall (陳氏宗祠) and Nos. 13-14 in Lung Mei Village (龍尾村), Wong Ancestral Hall in Tai Mei Tuk (大尾篤黃氏宗祠) and Nos. 52-57 in Wong Chuk Tsuen (黃竹村). All these buildings have good value from a heritage and cultural point of view.

Group Value

It is considered that the question of adaptive re-use does not arise at the present time.

***Adaptive
Re-use***