

Historic Building Appraisal

No. 66 Hang Mei Tsuen

Ping Shan, Yuen Long

Ping Shan (屏山) was settled by the Tangs (鄧) in the late Southern Song (*Historical Interest*) (南宋, 1127-1279) dynasty. Tang Yuen-ching (鄧元禎) is considered as the first ancestor of the Tangs who settled there in 1216. Two villages were first founded including Hang Tau (坑頭) and Hang Mei (坑尾) villages, the former in the north and the latter in the south. The former was founded by Waai-tak (懷德, 1548-1622) and the latter by Waai-yee (懷義, 1529-1607), two brothers of the 14th generation. The house at No.66 of the village was erected by Tang Gang-tong (鄧廣棠, 1771-1841) for his second son Chiu-kwai (朝桂, 1794-1819) as he built houses for his six sons. It is not known when the house was built. It was probably before Chiu-kwai's birth and before Gang-tong's death between the 59th year of Qianlong (乾隆, 1794) reign and the 21st year of the Daoguang (道光, 1841) reign of the Qing (清) dynasty. The house was the residence of Chiu-kwai and his descendents. As his adopted grandsons did not have any offspring, the family inheritance ceased. The house is considered not good for the Tangs and has been rented out to outsiders after the Japanese Occupation (1941-45).

The residential house is among a group of bigger houses in the western (*Architectural Merit*) part of the village. The Tang Ancestral Hall (鄧氏宗祠), the clan ancestral hall of the Tangs in Ping Shan, is three blocks away on its right. It is a Qing vernacular building having a one-hall-one-courtyard plan. It is constructed of green bricks with its walls to support its pitched roof of timber rafters, purlins and clay tiles. The main entrance is on the left external wall and a side entrance on the right for *fung shui* benefit. The courtyard probably houses a kitchen and a bathroom. The hall is with a living room in its front backed with a bedroom and bedrooms on the upper floor. Above the lintel of main entrance is a projected eave with plastered mouldings of pattered leaves and that of the side entrance is half-damaged. The door frames, window frames and five lower courses of the external walls are of granite. The main ridge of the building is with curling ends with weathered plastered mouldings of flowers and curling grass. Wall frieze and gable walls are with mouldings of plum, peony and floral patterns.

It is a residential building to witness the history of Chiu-kwai and his (*Rarity*) family in Hang Mei Tsuen.

It has some built heritage value.

***Built Heritage
Value***

Temporary structure was built at the back of the house. The authenticity of the house is basically kept.

Authenticity

It has group value with the Tang Ancestral Hall, Yu Kiu Ancestral Hall (愈喬二公祠), Kun Ting Study Hall (覲廷書室) and other historic buildings of the village.

Group Value

Gang-tong was a military *xiucai* (秀才) and a naval officer in the Qing government. Chiu-kwai and his adopted son Man-ping (文炳, 1830-1878) did not gain any title in the Imperial Civil Service Examination and they were commonly called *chushi* (處士). Man-ping had four sons but they both bore no child. They did not adopt any child from other branch of the Tangs. The house was inherited by his two sons Sun-hing (善興) and Knok-ling (岳齡). After they died, the building was managed by the Tang Wai Hing Tso (鄧渭卿祖) of the Tangs. The Tangs were the majority of the village. The Tangs worshipped their ancestors at the Tang Ancestral Hall in the village especially at the Chinese New Year and at the Ching Ming (清明節) and Chung Yeung (重陽節) Festivals. They took part in the Da Chiu (打醮) organized by Ping Shan villages. Children of the Tangs studied at the Tang Ancestral Hall and Tat Tak Public School (達德學校). They had a security group called Ping Shan Village Vigilant Guard Group (屏山鄉更練團) established in the 17th century providing patrol and security services for the villages. The group was disbanded in 2003. The soul tablets Chiu-kwai, Man-ping and his sons are still at the altar of the house which were worshipped by some of the tenants.

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