

Historic Building Appraisal

Chan Nam Tak Ancestral Hall

Lik Keng Wong Uk, Luk Keng

Chan Man-tai (陳萬泰) was a Hakka (客家) who settled with his family in Xinan (新安) of Guangdong (廣東) province in the 58th year of the Kangxi (康熙, 1719) reign of the Qing (清) dynasty. His fifth son Tze-tak (子德) moved to Lo Wai (老圍, or Sheung Wai 上圍) of Luk Keng (鹿頸) (now known as Luk Keng Chan Uk 鹿頸陳屋) in the Yongzheng (雍正, 1723-1735) reign of the dynasty. Another son of Man-tai, Nam-tak (男德), moved to Ha Wai (下圍) next to Wong Uk (黃屋) in the 5th year of the Qianlong (乾隆, 1740) reign. Wong Uk in the north of Chan Uk was occupied by the Wongs. It is said that the Wongs were afraid of bandits and pirates that Wong Chun-yu (黃春儒) invited Nam-tak and his family to settle next to their village so that they could have stronger forces against the enemies (Wong Uk and Ha Wai are now known as Lung Keng Wong Uk 鹿頸黃屋). The Chan Nam Tak Ancestral Hall (男德陳公祠) was built to commemorate the founder Nam-tak. The building was probably built in the Qianlong (1736-1795) reign. The Chans said that it was renovated in the 34th year of the Guangxu (光緒, 1908) reign. The building has an age of over 100 years. The Chans of Sheung Tam Shui Hang (上担水坑) and Sam Tung Uk (三棟屋) in Tsuen Wan have the same ancestor as the Chans in Luk Keng. Man-tai's third son, Hau-tak (侯德), was the ancestor of the Chans in Sam Tung Uk.

**Historical
Interest**

Located in two long parallel rows of village houses, the ancestral hall occupies the structure of two houses, one in front of the other. This alignment is very unusual for an ancestral hall. This might be an extension of the hall making use of two houses. The long and narrow hall is a Qing vernacular building having a plan of two houses each has a two-hall-one-courtyard layout. An additional open courtyard is between the two houses. The *dong chung* (檔中) is at the end of the front house whilst the altar is at the end wall of the rear house. The building is constructed of granite blocks, green bricks and rammed earth with its walls to support the pitched roofs of timber rafters, purlins and clay tiles. The altar has a soul tablet of the Chan ancestors for worship. An incense burner is at the rear courtyard. The front façade is of granite blocks. The name of the hall is engraved above the lintel flanked by four wall paintings of landscape. A fascia board of flowers and scroll carving is under the eave. The ridge is with a pair of red mouldings at its two ends.

**Architectural
Merit**

It is an ancestral hall of the Chan clan to witness their settlement in Luk Keng Wong Uk.

Rarity

The ancestral hall composing of two aligned houses is rare. It has considerable built heritage value. ***Built Heritage Value***

The building was renovated in 1986. Its authenticity is kept. ***Authenticity***

The children in the village studied at a village school called Man Lam School (文林學校) named after a branch of the Chans called Man Lam Tong (文林堂) in the old days. The school was closed in 1952 and replaced by the Luk Keng Public School (鹿頸學校). The ancestral hall is still used for ancestral worship of the Chan ancestors. Dim Dang (點燈) ritual has been discontinued since the 1980s. The Chans do participate in the Da Chiu (打醮) of Luk Keng and Nam Chung (南涌) held once every ten years. ***Social Value, & Local Interest***