

## Historic Building Appraisal

### Mo Tai Temple

#### Ting Kok, Tai Po

Mo Tai Temple (武帝宮) in Ting Kok (汀角) village, Tai Po, was built before the 50<sup>th</sup> year of the Qianlong (乾隆, 1785) reign of the Qing (清) dynasty as a stone tablet of the temple renovation has the dating inscribed on it. Ting Kok, originally called Ting Kai (汀溪), was a Punti (本地) village founded before the 27<sup>th</sup> year of the Kangxi (康熙, 1688) reign of the Qing dynasty. It was a multi-surname village of 14 clans. The temple was set up for the worship of the Kwan Tai (關帝) deity and for the solving of conflicts among the villagers. Kwan Tai is a legendary warrior and hero in the Three Kingdoms (三國, 220-265) period. He is a symbol of bravery, loyalty and righteousness very much patronized by the forces, police, those of martial arts and others.

*Historical  
Interest*

The temple is a Qing vernacular building of a two-hall-one-courtyard plan of three bays. The open courtyard is between the entrance and main halls. The building was constructed of green bricks with its walls to support its pitched roofs of timber rafters, purlins and clay tiles. Its roofs however have been turned into reinforced concrete ones with some parts of its internal and external walls plastered. Its roofs are covered with green ceramic tiles. The symmetrical design temple has its finely-carved altar in the middle of the main hall housing the statue of the Kwan Tai deity with Chow Chong (周倉), his faithful subordinate, and his son Kwan Ping (關平) on either side. Its side chambers are with the Earth God (土地) and the Shen Nong (神農) deities for worship. Its ridges are each with a pair of green ceramic *zhengwens* (正吻) on either end for decoration. Above the doorway at the recessed entrance is a name board of the temple flanked by two wall friezes of figure paintings of the Chinese novel Shoushenji (搜神記). On the front façade are also wall friezes of calligraphy and paintings of flowers and birds.

*Architectural  
Merit*

It is a Kwan Tai temple to witness the history of the Ting Kok village.

*Rarity*

It has some built heritage value.

*Built Heritage  
Value*

The temple was renovated in 1785, 1978 and 2000. The maintenance has been good. Its authenticity is diminished due to its recent unsympathetic renovation.

*Authenticity*

It has group value with the ancestral halls in the village.

*Group Value*

Kwan Tai Festival (關帝誕) is on the 24<sup>th</sup> of the sixth lunar month. The villagers however celebrate it on the 13<sup>th</sup> of the first lunar month. The statue of the deity would be placed at a temporary shed for the performance of Cantonese opera for three days and nights. The temple has been managed by the Ting Kok Rural Committee since 1992. Funding for the renovation and activities of the temple is from the donation of the villagers called Yen Ding Chin (人丁錢). In the 1930s, a school was erected in the forecourt of the temple for the village children. It collapsed in the late 1930s and the children studied in the Ting Kok Rural Committee Building (汀角村村公所) instead.

*Social Value,  
& Local  
Interest*