

## Historic Building Appraisal

### Hip Tin Temple

Cheung Shue Tan, Tai Po, N.T.

Hip Tin Temple (協天宮) of Cheung Shue Tan (樟樹灘) in Tai Po was erected by the Wans (溫) of the village. The time when the temple was built is unknown. It is for the worship of Kwan Tai (關帝), also known as Hip Tin Tai Tai (協天大帝, Great Emperor Assisting the Heaven), and the temple is so named. Kwan Tai is a legendary general in the Three Kingdoms period (三國, 220-265) who is famous of his bravery, loyalty and righteousness most popular for worship by the soldiers, policemen, forces, those of martial arts and others. Other than his statue housed in the altar for worship, statues of his son Kwan Ping (關平) and Chau Chong (周倉) his follower are standing beside it.

**Historical  
Interest**

Though the timing of the temple's erection is not known, the building is of a Qing vernacular design. It is a simple two-hall building with an open courtyard in between. Structurally the internal walls and gables support the roofs which are composed of a bracket system with rafters, purlins and clay tiles. The recessed entrance has its door framed with granite blocks and a stone name-board of the temple above the lintel. The greenbrick walls in and out have been all been plastered. Its ridge is decorated with geometric and flowers-and-rocks mouldings. Façade friezes and wall paintings are with landscape, Eight Immortals (八仙), floral and other motifs mouldings.

**Architectural  
Merit**

It is only a rare Kwan Tai temple in local context.

**Rarity**

A simple Qing vernacular temple with no spectacular features is low in its built heritage value. It was renovated in 1898, 1910 and lately in 1997. The repairs have moderately diminished its authenticity.

**Built Heritage  
Value &  
Authenticity**

The temple was used as a school premises teaching children of the village in the old days. A school called Shue Yan School (樹人學校) was later established next to it and the temple school then stopped functioning. Tai Ping Ching Chiu (太平清醮) had been held at the temple and the village but no longer after 1935. Kwan Tai Festival on the 13<sup>th</sup> day of the fifth lunar month was seriously celebrated but has been very much ignored after the Second World War.

**Social Value,  
& Local  
Interest**