

Historic Building Appraisal
Tin Hau Temple
Tai Po Kau Hui, Tai Po

Tin Hau Temple (天后宮) in Tai Po Kau Hui (大埔舊墟, Tai Po Old Market) was built in the 30th year of the Kangxi reign (康熙, 1691) as its bell has the dating inscribed on it. It was built by the fishermen of Tai Po for the worship of Tin Hau. It then was close to the sea but has become far away due to reclamation for development.

Historical Interest

Two side chambers were added later, the left being the Hip Tin Temple (協天宮) for the worship of Kwan Tai (關帝), also called Hip Tin Tai Tai (協天大帝, Great Emperor Assisting the Heaven), a symbol of bravery, loyalty and righteousness and the right being the Tam Sin Temple (譚仙宮) for the worship of Tam Chiu (譚峭), a deity known for his protection given to fishermen and his expertise in weather forecasting. The temple was important as it was at the Tai Po Old Market, one of the oldest in the New Territories, until a new one was built on the southern shore of Lam Tsuen River (林村河).

Architectural Merit

The temple is a Qing vernacular building having two halls flanked with two side chambers for the worship of two other major deities, the Kwan Tai and Tam Kung. Past renovations have greatly modernized the building which roofs are in glazed green ceramic tile and external walls thickly plastered. Whilst its door frames and bases in granite blocks remain unchanged, its roofs are supported by a system of rafters and purlins. The ridge decorations have replaced by a set of ceramic dragons, a pearl and geometric patterns. The wall friezes on the façade are of the Eight Immortals (八仙).

Rarity

The historic temple is kept to witness the long past Tai Po. The much modernized building has little built heritage value but its relics including its tablets, bells, etc. are of great historic value. Recorded renovations include those in 1834, 1937, 1962, 1970 and 1986. Many of the past renovations are reconstructions greatly minimize its authenticity.

Built Heritage Value & Authenticity

Tin Hau Festival (天后誕) on the 23rd of the third lunar month will be celebrated with activities such as Shen Gong opera performances (神功戲) and lion dances organized by a Tin Hau Festival Committee.

Social Value, & Local Interest