

Historic Building Appraisal
Tsang Ancestral Hall
No. 46 San Tau Kok, Tai Po

San Tau Kok (石散頭角) village is a Hakka (客家) multi-clan village on the northern shore of Plover Cove (船灣海), Tai Po. It was inhabited by the Sung (宋), the Tsangs (曾), the Chans (陳) and the Lees (李). The Sung were the earliest settlers of the village. Originally inhabited in Nanfeng (南豐) of Shandong (山東) province, the Tsangs moved to Wuhua (五華) of Guangdong (廣東) province. Tsang Wai-cheung (曾維祥), the 12th generation ancestor of the clan, moved from Wuhua to San Tau Kok in the Kangxi (康熙, 1662-1722) reign of the Qing (清) dynasty. Another branch of the Tsangs moved to the village in later stage. They jointly built an ancestral hall in the village. This Tsang Ancestral Hall (曾氏宗祠) in the village was built or renovated in 1905 as a wall painting has the dating "乙巳" (1905) written on it. The hall is also called Tsang Sam Sang Tong (曾三省堂) to commemorate Tsang Sum (曾參), a prominent Tsang and a student of Confucius (孔子).

*Historical
Interest*

In alignment with a row of houses in the middle of the village, the ancestral hall is a detached village house having a one-hall-one-courtyard plan. It is a Qing vernacular building constructed of green bricks and coral stones with its walls to support its pitched roof of timber rafters, purlins and clay tiles. The walls are plastered and the floor is with cement screeding. The fair-faced brick altar occupies the entire end wall of the hall housing a soul tablet in the middle for worship. An image of Kwan Yam (觀音) is on the left of the tablet also for worship. Behind the tablet is a big Chinese character “壽” (longevity) written on a piece of red paper flanked with a couplet. Two tie beams are carved respectively with “百子千孫” (Hundreds of Sons and Thousands of Grandsons) and “奕世其昌” (Prosperity from Generation to Generation). Wall frieze paintings of birds, flowers and curling leaves are under the eave of the hall. The name of the ancestral hall is moulded on the wall above the lintel of the recessed entrance. Two peacock blue ceramic roosters are at two ends of the front ridge.

*Architectural
Merit*

It is an ancestral hall to witness the settlement of the Tsangs in San Tau Kok.

Rarity

It has little built heritage value.

*Built Heritage
Value*

The simple hall has its authenticity kept.

Authenticity

It has group value with the Lee Ancestral Hall (李氏宗祠) in the village.

Group Value

The Tsangs engaged themselves in fishing and farming activities. Their produce were sold at the Tai Wo Market (太和市) in Tai Po. They also produced lime with the corals and shells collected from the Plover Cove. The lime was an ingredient of the mortar for the construction of village houses and used as a fertilizer. The ancestral hall has ancestral worship regularly and during the Chinese New Year and at festivals. Weddings and funerals were held at the ancestral hall other than ancestral worship. The hall was also used for serving banquets to the villagers. Matters concerning the common interest of the Tsangs would also be discussed and dealt with at the hall.

*Social Value,
& Local Interest*