

Historic Building Appraisal
No. 43 Kau Wa Keng, Kwai Tsing, N.T.

1113

The Tsangs (曾) in Kau Wa Keng, also locally known as Kau Wa Keng Old Village (九華徑舊村), are Hakkas (客家) who settled in the village in the Qianlong (乾隆, 1736-1795) reign of the Qing (清) dynasty. Before their arrival, the village was settled by a family surnamed Ng (吳). Tsang Bak-tao (曾伯韜) first moved from Wangniugang (望牛崗) of Danshui (淡水), Huizhou (惠州), to Lizhujiao village (壙竹角村) of Baoan (寶安), Guangdong (廣東) province, that is, the present-day Tai Lam Chung (大欖涌) in 1737. His second son Wai-heng (維亨) later moved to Kau Wa Keng in the mid-18th century. Wai-heng is considered as the founding ancestor of the village.

*Historical
Interest*

Hong Kong Island was declared as a free port in 1842 and the Kowloon Peninsula was leased by Britain in 1860, which resulted in the general growth of China trade. A large number of Chinese were employed by shipping companies. Many villagers in Kau Wa Keng started to work as seamen before the lease of the New Territories. Their remittances made the village well-off.

No. 43 is a two-storey village house. It is believed to be constructed around 1900 by Tsang Hin-shui (曾憲瑞) a.k.a. Kwok-shui (國瑞), who like other villagers in the village made his money by working as a seaman. His son, Hing-yu (慶餘), also worked on the steamship of Holland after the Japanese Occupation (1941-1945) until the early 1960s.

The house appears to consist of two side-by-side units with party walls dividing them which project on the front elevation to form two recessed bays. The front of the building has an imbalanced and asymmetrical appearance. The original windows which were small and narrow with security grilles and wooden casements have been replaced with modern aluminium framed windows. A modern entrance door has also been installed. Decorations are few being confined to moulded corbelled brackets to the eaves and a pierced balustrade panel to the first floor balcony.

*Architectural
Merit*

The house has some built heritage value. The old entrance door and windows have been replaced with modern ones, whereas the moulded corbelled brackets to the eaves and a pierced balustrade panel to the first floor balcony are retained.

*Rarity,
Built Heritage
Value &
Authenticity*

The social value of the house lies in the historical role it has played as a residence for the Tsang family. As one of the remaining village houses in Kau

*Social Value
& Local*

Wa Keng, it has historical as well as local interest.

Interest

It has group value with the other historic buildings in the village, and the former Lai Chi Kok Hospital (荔枝角醫院) (Grade 3). *Group Value*

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