

Historic Building Appraisal
Fan Ancestral Hall
Ho Pui Tsuen, Pat Heung, Yuen Long

Same as Ma On Kong (馬鞍崗) village, Ho Pui Tsuen (河背村) is in the southern end of Pat Heung (八鄉), Yuen Long, and it is a multi-lineage village also inhabited by the Wus (胡), the Fans (范) and the Kans (簡). With the increase of population in Ma On Kong, the villagers of the three clans moved southwards to establish the village. They can be considered as brother villages. An organization called Nam Ching Tong (南正堂) was formed by the three clans to deal with their mutual benefits. Both the Fans and the Wus had been in Tai Lam Chung (大欖涌) before they moved to Ma On Kong engaged in fishing. They moved to the latter village in order to improve their life by cultivation. Two brothers of the Fans, Hing-fong (馨芳) and Hing-suen (馨萱), settled in the village in the Qianlong (乾隆, 1736-1795) reign of the Qing (清) dynasty. The Fan Ancestral Hall (范氏家祠) is a family ancestral hall. It was probably a mud hut built in the 19th century. The present one was built in the mid-1950s to replace the old one. The villagers, both the Fans and those of other surnames, participated in the reconstruction. They collected stones from a hill nearby. The informant, a Ms. Wu, carried sand to the site.

*Historical
Interest*

The ancestral hall is in the forefront of the village facing an open ground. It is a Qing vernacular building having a two-hall-one-courtyard plan. The open courtyard is in-between the entrance and main halls. The internal walls and the front façade are plastered and painted. The floors are cement-screeded. It is constructed of granite blocks with its walls to support its pitched roofs of timber rafters, purlins and clay tiles. The granite blocks were quarried from a nearby hill. The altar is in the middle of the end wall housing a soul tablet of the Fan ancestors for worship. A Kwun Yam (觀音) image is on the left of the tablet also for worship. The name of the hall is moulded on a piece of stone on the wall above the lintel of the recessed entrance. The front ridges are with curling ends.

*Architectural
Merit*

It is an ancestral hall of the Fans to witness their settlement in Ho Pui village.

Rarity

It has little built heritage value.

*Built Heritage
Value*

Its authenticity is kept.

Authenticity

It has group value with the On Ding Sai Kui (安定世居) ancestral hall and some old village houses in the village. *Group Value*

The Fans in the village were branched out from Ma On Kong village in its north. They would worship their ancestors at the Fan Ancestral Hall (范氏宗祠) in Ma On Kong at festivals including the Chinese New Year, Ching Ming (清明節) and Chung Yeung Festivals (重陽節). They would as well make worship to their own ancestors in their family hall. Wedding rituals are still held at the hall. At funerals, *nammo* (喃嘸) priests will be hired to lead the soul of the deceased who passed away at the age of 60 or above to the soul tablet, a practice known as *sheung shan toi* (上神枱). *Social Value, & Local Interest*

The Fan Ancestral Hall was a place for clan meetings until the 1950s, after which the meeting place was switched to Yuk Ying School (育英學校) and Ho Pui Tsuen Rural Office building (河背村鄉公所) established in 1951 and 1996 respectively.