

**Historic Building Appraisal**  
**Chan Ancestral Hall**  
**Sheung Tam Shui Hang, Sha Tau Kok, N.T.**

The Chan Ancestral Hall (陳氏家祠) in Sheung Tam Shui Hang (上担水坑) village is in the closed area of Sha Tau Kok (沙頭角). It was built in 1911 by Chan Fat-cheung (陳發章). Tam Shui Hang (担水坑, later divided into Sheung or Upper Shui Hang and Ha or Lower Tam Shui Hang 上、下担水坑) was a multi-lineage one inhabited by the Ngs (吳), the Wans (溫), the Yaus (丘), the Chungs (鍾) and others. The Ngs were the earliest settlers who came in the Shunzhi (順治, 1644-1661) reign of the Qing (清) dynasty. Originated from Dabu (大埔) of Chaozhou (潮州), Guangdong (廣東) province, some of the Hakka (客家) Chans moved to Luofong (羅芳) of Shenzhen (深圳) in the Qianlong (乾隆, 1736-1795) reign of the same dynasty. Some others settled in Tam Shui Hang (担水坑), Luk Keng (鹿頸) of Sha Tau Kok and Sam Tung Uk (三棟屋) of Tsuen Wan. Eight families of the Chans settled in village and altogether five ancestral halls of the Chans were built. This ancestral hall is the only surviving one. Fat-cheung made his fortune by working in Jamaica in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and returned to the village in 1915. He bought a large lot of land in the area and had business in Tai Po and Fanling. Many of the Chans however have moved overseas since the 1960-70s (and some resided in the urban area) leaving only four families now in the village.

*Historical  
Interest*

Located in the middle of the village, the ancestral hall is a Qing vernacular building having a one-hall-one-courtyard plan. The open courtyard in front of the hall is covered with corrugated sheets. It is constructed of green bricks with its walls to support its pitched roofs of timber rafters, purlins and clay tiles. The altar occupies the entire end wall of the hall. It is an exceptional fine wooden altar extended to the ceiling with carvings of auspicious treasures, flowers, birds, deer, unicorns, lions and others. Two tie beams and fascia boards under the eaves are also with fine carving of similar motifs. The name of the ancestral hall is engraved on a piece of stone on the wall above the lintel. Wall paintings of flowers and birds and calligraphy are at the front façade and at internal and external walls. Granite is used for the doorframe, wall corners and lower courses of the front wall.

*Architectural  
Merit*

It is the only remaining ancestral hall of the Chans to witness their settlement in Tam Shui Hang.

*Rarity*

It has considerable built heritage value. Its altar, tie beams and fascia boards with fine wooden carvings are of extreme high aesthetic value. ***Built Heritage Value***

Its authenticity is basically kept. ***Authenticity***

Other than for ancestral worship, the hall was used as a place for teaching the village children in the 1910-20s until it was replaced by the Kwan Ah School (群雅學校) erected in the village in 1930. Tsui-sheung (招常), the son of Fat-cheung, taught at the hall. Wedding, funeral and Dim Dang (點燈) rituals were held at the hall. Though most of the Chans have moved out of the village, they do come back at the Chinese New Year and at the Chung Yeung (重陽節) and Ching Ming Festivals (清明節) to pay ancestral worship with offerings to their ancestors at the hall. ***Social Value, & Local Interest***