

Historic Building Appraisal
Chu Ancestral Hall
Ma Yau Tong, Sai Kung

Ma Yau Tong (馬游塘) was a multi-surname Hakka (客家) village inhabited by the Lis (李), the Tsangs (曾) and the Chus (朱). The Lis were the first settlers followed by the other two. The Chus and the Tsangs were from Wuhua (五華) of Guangdong (廣東) province who settled in Sha Tau Kok (沙頭角) before they moved to Ma Yau Tong. It is believed they were in the village as far as in the 18th century. The first **Chu Ancestral Hall** (朱氏宗祠) was built probably in the 19th century, and the present one was rebuilt in **1956**. The hall is also known as Pui Kwok Tong (沛國堂). The Chus were mainly farmers who grew vegetables. Firewood and grass were cut and sold to Kowloon Tsai (九龍仔), Kowloon City (九龍城), Hung Hom (紅磡) and Yau Ma Tei (油麻地) and Cha Kwo Ling (茶果嶺) where they also got their daily necessities.

**Historical
Interest**

The ancestral hall is a small Qing (清) design vernacular building having a one-hall-one-courtyard plan. The open courtyard is in front of the main hall. It is constructed of bricks, stones and concrete with its walls to support its pitched roofs of timber rafters, purlins and clay tiles. The walls are plastered and painted with white and cream colours. The altar is occupying the entire end wall of the hall with a soul tablet of the Chu ancestors for worship. The recessed front entrance is indented inward for *fung shui* reason. The name of the hall is moulded on a piece of brown stone. Lower courses of the front wall are covered with brown ceramic tiles. The wall friezes at the gable walls and at the back wall are painted black edged with yellow.

**Architectural
Merit**

It is a simple ancestral hall of the Chus to remind their settlement in Ma Yau Tong.

Rarity

It has some built heritage value. Its indented-inward entrance is a bite special.

**Built Heritage
Value**

The authenticity of the hall is kept.

Authenticity

Members of the three branches of the Chus have their ancestral worship at the ancestral hall at Chung Yeung (重陽節) and Ching Ming Festivals (清明節). Dim Dang (點燈) ritual would be held for the new born baby boys of the Chus on 14th to 20th of the first lunar month at the hall. They are not necessarily those born in previous year, but just once in their life. The lanterns would be taken to

**Social Value,
& Local
Interest**

the Pak Kung (北港) of the village in the morning and brought back to the hall at night. The lanterns would be burnt in front of the Pak Kung on the 20th of the month.

Originally, Chu Ancestral Hall faced towards large fields. Today, the fields have been reclaimed and covered with modern residential units. Two ancestral halls are located nearby. Tsang Ancestral Hall (曾氏宗祠) which is situated along the same row is already rebuilt, while Li Ancestral Hall (李氏家祠) located on the other side of the fields is a recorded item of the Antiquities and Monuments Office. There is a Pak Kung (伯公) besides Chu Ancestral Hall and a Dai Wong (大王) not far away from Li Ancestral Hall.

Group Value