

**Historic Building Appraisal**  
**Tsang Ancestral Hall**  
**No. 28B Kau Wa Keng, Kwai Tsing, N.T.**

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 (壠竹角村) 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-18<sup>th</sup> 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.

It is believed that this Tsang Ancestral Hall (曾氏家祠) was built before 1905 to commemorate Tsang Chiu-fung (曾朝鳳), the son of Wai-heng (維亨).

Located in a separate row of village houses in the west of the village, the ancestral hall is connected to a village house on its left. It has a two-hall-one-courtyard plan. The open courtyard is between the entrance and main halls. The long and narrow building is constructed of grey bricks and rubbles with its walls to support its pitched roofs. But by now all the facades have been covered by modern mosaic tiles. The corrugated sheets of the roof have also been replaced with new green glazed tiles. The altar is in the middle of the end wall housing a soul tablet of the Tsangs for worship. The name of the hall is inscribed on a new granite plaque on the wall above the doorway of the recessed entrance. Only the granite doorframe and granite blocks on the front facade look historic.

*Architectural  
Merit*

It is an ancestral hall of the Tsangs to witness their settlement in the area, but has undergone extensive alteration with modern materials.

*Rarity, Built  
Heritage  
Value &  
Authenticity*

Many of the Tsangs were seamen who worked overseas. They sent money via remittances back to the village, part of it was used for the repair of the building. Other than for the ancestral worship, the hall was used to seek the ancestors' blessing for weddings, birth of babies and birthdays of elders. It was also used as a meeting place. Dim Dang (點燈) ritual is still carried out at the ancestral hall on the 1<sup>st</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> days of the Chinese New Year for new born baby boys of the previous year. ***Social Value, & Local Interest***

It has group value with 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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08-25-070. *Stonecutters Island in the background and Kau Wa Kang in the foreground* (photograph), 1927.

HKRS209-4-6-41. *Sheet 6. Villages: Kau Pa Kang* (Map No. 104(41)).

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