

Historic Building Appraisal

Shung Man Study Hall

No. 55 Wang Toi Shan Ho Lik Pui, Pat Heung, Yuen Long

Wang Toi Shan (橫台山) in Pat Heung (八鄉), Yuen Long, was first settled by the Hakka (客家) Tangs (鄧) who developed from the oldest Wing Ning Lei (永寧里) village to others. It was later also inhabited by the Lees (李), the Loks (駱), the Los (盧) and others. The Tangs moved from Shibi (石壁) of Ninghua (寧化) in Fujian (福建) province to Chaozhou (潮州) of Guangdong (廣東) province and then southwards to Huizhou (惠州) after generations. Tang Ting-kwai (鄧廷桂) of the 14th generation moved from Huizhou to Wang Toi Shan in the 27th year of Kangxi (康熙, 1688) reign of the Qing (清) dynasty. He was regarded as the founding ancestor of the Tangs in Wang Toi Shan. His descendents later branched out to different villages in Wang Toi Shan and other areas. Descendents of Hung-tat (洪達), a son of Ting-kwai, branched out to Ho Lik Pui (河瀝背) other than staying in Wing Ning Lei. Shung Man Study Hall (崇文書室) in Ho Lik Pui was built by a son of Tang Teng-yi (鄧鼎彝), the grandson of Hung-tat. It was built in the Jiaqing (嘉慶, 1796-1820) reign of the Qing dynasty.

**Historical
Interest**

The study hall was a detached building in the north of the village. It was much altered in the 1970-90s when it was used as a factory and left ruined thereafter. Only the main hall with its side chambers and part of the walls of the building are standing. It was probably a Qing vernacular building having a two-hall-one-courtyard plan. A forecourt is in front of the building. It was constructed of green bricks with its walls to support its pitched roofs of timber rafters, purlins and clay tiles. The walls are plastered and painted. The floors are cement-screeded. The ridge is decorated with a pair of red broken geometric mouldings at its two ends. The roof of the hall is with false ceiling with carved brackets.

**Architectural
Merit**

It is a ruined study hall of the Tangs to remind their history and education work in Wang Toi Shan Ho Pui Lik village.

Rarity

It has little built heritage value.

**Built Heritage
Value**

The building was in ruin leaving the dilapidated main hall only. It has its authenticity lost.

Authenticity

It has group value with other selected historic buildings in Wang Toi Shan,

Group Value

including the Entrance Gate (圍門), Tang Ting Kwai Ancestral Hall (廷桂鄧公祠) and Tang Hung Tat Ancestral Hall (洪達鄧公祠) in Wing Ning Lei in the north.

The study hall was erected to provide a venue for the village children to be educated to gain success in the Imperial Civil Service Examination in order to pursue an official career in the Qing government. Nine Tangs of Wang Toi Shan obtained the title of *xiuca* (秀才) in the district examination who had been trained in the study halls including the Shung Man Study Hall. Teachers were employed from the mainland teaching the children with Chinese classics and books with the practice of abacus and letter writing. The lessons were taught in Hakka dialect taking also children from Hakka villages from Cheung Sheung (嶂上) in Sai Kung and Sha Tau Kok (沙頭角). With the abolition of the Examination in 1905, modern subjects were introduced including mathematics and general knowledge. Martial arts was also taught in the hall with *wujuren* (武舉人) employed from Huizhou. The building was no longer a study hall since 1933. A Toi Shan Public School (台山公立學校) was erected by the Tangs in 1954 to replace the work of the study halls. The building was used as a factory of woolen sweaters and rattan products in the late 1970s to 1990s. It was then used as a warehouse until 1998.

***Social Value,
& Local Interest***