

Historic Building Appraisal
Chung Ancestral Hall
No. 36 Ping Long, Tai Po

Ping Long (坪朗), Tai Om Shan (大菴山) and Tin Liu Ha (田寮下) are three Hakka (客家) villages in Lam Tsuen Valley (林村谷) of the Chungs who are the descendents of Chung Ning-kau (鍾寧玖). Ning-kau settled in Ping Long from Qingqi (清溪) of Dongguan (東莞), Guangdong (廣東) province, in the 25th year of Kangxi (康熙, 1686) reign of the Qing (清) dynasty. One of his sons Kau-yuan (久元) moved to Tai Om Shan village in the 42nd year (1703) of the same reign whilst his other two sons, Kau-hin (久顯) and Kau-tat (久達), remained to stay in Ping Long. One of Kau-yuan's sons Yuk-chin (毓遷) moved to Tin Liu Ha later to establish a new village. Another son Yuk-shau (毓秀) moved to Ping Chau (坪洲) island in the north-east of Hong Kong in the 2nd year of Yongzheng (雍正, 1724) reign of the same dynasty. His other son Yuk-hing (毓興) chose to stay in Tai Om Shan. Ping Long was originally not a single-clan village also inhabited by the Chengs (鄭) who later moved to Southeast Asia countries and some returned to Lam Tsuen. The descendents of Kau-hin and Kau-tat built an ancestral hall of their own respectively in the village. This one at No.36 of the village was built about 250 years ago by the descendents of Kau-hin. Another ancestral hall at No.21 of the village was built by the descendents of Kau-tat more than 200 years ago. Descendents of Kau-hin became Christians as a church Ling Chun Tong (懷遵堂) was set up by the Chinese Christian Church in Tai Po (中華基督教會大埔堂) in the village in 1901. After their belief in the religion, the ancestral hall has been left unattended. It has been deteriorating since then.

***Historical
Interest***

The ancestral hall was built at the same time with the two houses of Nos. 36A and 37 connected to its left. It shared with them a common roof. It is a Qing vernacular building having a one-hall-one-courtyard plan. It was constructed of green bricks and rammed earth with its walls to support its pitched roofs of timber rafters, purlins and clay tiles. Except the front façade, the walls of the building are plastered. Whilst the front façade and the gable walls are still standing, the roof and part of the rear wall have collapsed. The interior of the hall is with overgrowth. No name board is at the façade of the recessed entrance.

***Architectural
Merit***

It is an ancestral hall to witness the settlement of the Hakka Chungs in Ping Long village.

Rarity

It has some built heritage value.

***Built Heritage
Value***

The building is a ruin. The building does not have its authenticity kept.

Authenticity

It has group value with another ancestral hall of the Chungs in the village. The latter is the only ancestral hall in the village.

Group Value

The ancestral hall is not used for ancestral worship of the Chung ancestors of the Kau-hin branch. It is said that the descendents want to demolish the ancestral hall to build a 3-storey house on the site for use by the Chung Kau Hin Tong (鍾久顯堂) as a place for gathering and worship.

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