

Historic Building Appraisal

Kan Ancestral Hall

No. 68 Shui Tsiu Lo Wai, Shap Pat Heung, Yuen Long

Shui Tsiu Lo Wai (水蕉老圍) is a Hakka (客家) village having a history of some 300 years in Shap Pat Heung (十八鄉) of Yuen Long occupied by eight clans including the Kans (簡), the Tsangs (曾), the Chans (陳) the Cheungs (張), the Yeungs (楊) and others. The Kans in Shui Tsiu Lo Wai belong to one of the four branches of the Kans in Baoan (寶安) of Guangdong (廣東) province. Yi-si (以斯) moved from Jinshadong (金沙洞) of Boulou (博羅) to Shek Pik (石壁) of Lantau and later settled in the village in the early Kangxi (康熙, 1662-1722) reign of the Qing (清) dynasty. His father is called Lung-kai (龍溪) and the branch of Kans in the village is thus called Lung Kai Fong (龍溪房). Some of the Kans later branched out to Hung Tso Tin Tsuen (紅棗田村), Kong Tau Tsuen (港頭村) and Nga Yiu Tau (瓦窰頭) of Shap Pat Heung and Ma On Kong (馬鞍崗) of Pat Heung (八鄉). The Kan Ancestral Hall (簡氏宗祠) was built in the 1940s after the Second World War to replace the old one in ruin which was in the opposite of the present one.

**Historical
Interest**

Located in the middle of the village, the ancestral hall is connected to a house on its left. It is a Qing vernacular design building having a one-hall-one-courtyard plan. It is 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 and the floors with ceramic tiles. A soul tablet of the Kan ancestors is engraved on a piece of brown marble fixed on the wall behind the ceramic-tiled altar in the middle of the hall. Four couplets are also fixed on the wall with a wall painting of two phoenixes in the middle. The name of the hall is engraved on a piece of brown marble on the wall above the lintel of the recessed entrance. Wall frieze painting of landscape and calligraphy are on either side of the name board. A pair of red geometric mouldings is at two ends of the front and main ridges.

**Architectural
Merit**

It is an ancestral hall of the Kans to witness their settlement in Shui Tsiu Lo Wai.

Rarity

It has little built heritage value.

**Built Heritage
Value**

The building has been unsympathetically painted and modernized with the ceramic tiles used. Its authenticity has been diminished.

Authenticity

It has group value with the other ancestral halls of the Chans, the Yeungs and the Tses in the village. *Group Value*

The Kans including those in other villages in Shap Pat Heung and from Nga Yiu Tau would make ancestral worship to their ancestors at the hall at the Ching Ming (清明節) and Chung Yeung Festivals (重陽節) with special offerings. They would also have grave sweeping at the graves of their ancestors. Before the Second World War the Kans had Dim Dang (點燈) ritual at the hall for new born baby boys of previous year but discontinued after the war. *Social Value, & Local Interest*