

Historic Building Appraisal
Cheung Ancestral Hall
Kai Leng, Sheung Shui, New Territories

The Cheungs (張) in Kai Leng (雞嶺) village, Sheung Shui, were Hakkas (客家). They originated from Qitian (辭田) of Xingning (興寧), Guangdong (廣東) province, in the 25th year of the Jiaqing (嘉慶, 1820) period of Qing (清) Dynasty. In 1928, about 12 families headed by **Cheung Wai-hon** (張維翰) moved to the present area due to the construction of Shing Mun (Jubilee) Reservoir (城門水塘) between 1923 and 1939. Due to the reservoir project, many villages in Shing Mun area including Ho Lek Pui (河瀝背) inhabited by the Tangs (鄧氏), the Kos (高氏) and the Wus (胡氏) have to be moved. The Cheung Ancestral Hall (張氏) was built by Cheung Man-sheung (張文常) in 1930.

*Historical
Interest*

The ancestral hall is a Qing vernacular design building having a two-hall-one-courtyard plan. The open courtyard is between the entrance and main halls. The building is constructed of green bricks with its walls to support its pitched roofs of timber rafters, purlins and clay tiles. The walls are plastered. The altar is at the end wall of the main hall housing a soul tablet of the Cheung and Wu ancestors for worship (The wife of the first ancestor Cheung Lung-tai (張龍大) had been the wife of Wu Lung-pui (鄔龍裴) who died when she was pregnant. She then married to Lung-tai. The Cheungs recognized Lung-pui as the father of their second generation ancestor and thus worship him as well at the altar). Behind the altar on the wall is a piece of red paper with a big Chinese characters “壽” (longevity) written on it. Two tie beams at the main hall are with the Chinese characters “百子千孫” (Hundreds of Sons and Thousands of Grandsons and “奕世其昌” (Prosperity from Generation to Generation). The name of the hall is engraved on the wall above the lintel of the recessed entrance. The ridges and the front façade are without any decoration.

*Architectural
Merit*

It is an ancestral hall to remind the settlement of the Cheungs in Kai Leng.

Rarity

It has some built heritage value.

*Built Heritage
Value*

The authenticity is basically kept.

Authenticity

The Cheungs have the ancestral worships and celebrations of festivals at the ancestral hall. They have regular worship on the first and 15th days of each lunar month and with special offerings on the last day of the lunar year and on the second day of the Chinese New Year. Wedding and birthday banquets are held at the hall.

*Social Value,
& Local Interest*

The ancestral hall served as a venue for teaching the village children. A Kai Leng Kindergarten (雞嶺幼稚園) was housed at the hall organized by Cheung Chak-chi (張澤芝) giving a two-year elementary education to the children learning Chinese, English Mathematics and other subjects. The kindergarten had two teachers with about 20 students running up to the 1960s. The hall is also used to deal with village matters.

The physical environment of Kai Leng has undergone great change. The village is now surrounded by apartments and a public housing estate, Ching Ho Estate (清河邨). Outsiders have moved into the village while more indigenous inhabitants have moved away or emigrated overseas. They seldom go back to Kai Leng and report any birth to the clan elders.

*Immediate
Environs*

It is considered that the question of adaptive re-use does not arise at the present time.

*Adaptive
Re-use*