

Historic Building Appraisal
Fuk Sin Tai
Nos. 8-9 Tong Fong, Ta Kwu Ling

Tong Fong (塘坊) is a small village in the closed area in Ta Kwu Ling (打鼓嶺). It was inhabited by the Mans (萬) and the Wongs (黃), the formers being the majority. The Mans included those of Punti (本地) and the Hakka (客家). The Punti Mans were from Ping Che (坪輦) nearby and the Hakka Mans, of the 15th generation, from Liantong (蓮塘) of Xinan (新安), Guangdong (廣東) province. Some of the Liantong Mans also settled in Ping Che, Heung Yuen Wai (香園圍), Sai Kung and Tsuen Wan. Fuk Sin Tai (福善第), literally the Residence of Fortune and Benevolence, was built in 1922 by Man Yung-cheung (萬容章, 1881-1976), a 21st generation member of the Mans. Yung-cheung was a seaman and worked in Jamaica. He and his son Yuen-foo (遠孚, 1918-2003), born in Jamaica, moved to Liantong and settled finally in Tong Fong where they built the residence. The house is now occupied by Chi-keung (志強), the eldest son of Yuen-foo.

***Historical
Interest***

The residence is a three-bay Qing (清) vernacular building. The entrance is at the middle recessed bay. An entrance was later added on the right bay. A living room is in front of the middle bay with a bedroom at the back. In the middle of the end wall of the living room is an altar with a soul tablet of the Mans ancestors for worship. A sitting room is on the left bay with a bedroom at the back. Two bedrooms are at the right bay. A cockloft is above the bedroom of each bay for use as a bedroom. The building is constructed of green bricks and rammed earth with its walls to support its pitched roof of timber rafters, purlins and clay tiles. The walls are heavily plastered and the external walls are painted in yellow colour. The name of the building is moulded on the wall above the doorway of the recessed entrance. Above it is the wall frieze painting of flowers and rocks and calligraphy. A fascia board is under the eave with carving of flowers. Wall frieze relief mouldings of phoenixes, orchids and chrysanthemum are on the front façade walls. The two side internal walls at the living room are with exquisite paintings of flowers and curling patterns under the eave. The ridge is with a pair of geometric plastered mouldings at its two ends.

***Architectural
Merit***

It is a residence of the Mans to witness their settlement in Tong Fong village.

Rarity

It has some built heritage value.

***Built Heritage
Value***

Its authenticity is basically kept.

Authenticity

The Mans were engaged in agricultural farming who grew rice for their own consumption. They got their daily necessities from the Shek Wu Hui (石湖墟) in Sheung Shui (上水). A hut was built on the right of the building for keeping the cattle and used as their kitchen. Many of the Mans moved to Britain and later to Holland and other European countries engaged in catering business in the late 1950s and the 1960s. Many of the Mans are still settling in Europe. Yuen-foo and his sister-in-law, Chan Sun-giu (陳新嬌), were members of the guerilla in the mainland during the Japanese Occupation (1941-45). The Mans have their grave sweeping at the Chung Yeung Festival (重陽節) at Xilingxia (西岭下) with their brother Mans in Liantang. They also have grave sweeping at Tsiu Hang (蕉坑) and Heung Yuen Wai (香園圍). They celebrate Tin Hau Festival (天后誕) with other villagers at the Ping Yuen Tin Hau Temple (平源天后古廟) in Ping Che. The Mans studied at the Wing Kit Study Hall (永傑書室) erected in 1889 in the village. It was replaced by the new school Sing Ping School (昇平學校) built in 1946 where Chi-keung studied. The school was relocated by Ping Che Road (坪輦路) in 1961 due to its small size and was finally closed down in 1993.

*Social Value,
& Local
Interest*