

Historic Building Appraisal

Sung Ancestral Hall

Kuk Po Lo Wai, Luk Keng

Kuk Po (谷埔), north of Luk Keng (鹿頸), has six villages including Kuk Po Lo Wai (谷埔老圍), Kuk Po San Uk Ha (谷埔新屋下), Yi To (二肚), Sam To (三肚), Sze To (四肚) and Ng To (五肚). Kuk Po Lo Wai is the oldest village. Most of the villagers are Hakkas (客家) including the Yeungs (楊), the Sung (宋), the Chengs (鄭), the Lis (李), the Yaus (邱), the Hos (何) and the Ngs (吳). The Yeungs were the earliest settlers who moved to Kuk Po about 300 years ago. It is believed that the Sung were the second clan following the Yeungs to settle in Lo Wai. Sung Yuk-ying (宋玉英) was the founder of the clan who moved from Huizhou (惠州) of Guangdong (廣東) province to Kuk Po in the 18th century. They later branched to Kuk Po San Uk Ha (also known as San Wai 新圍) where they bought land from the Cheungs (張) of Fung Hang (鳳坑) northwest of Kuk Po. It is not known when the Sung Ancestral Hall (宋氏宗祠) was built. It might be built in the mid-18th century. The hall is also called King Siu Tong (京兆堂).

**Historical
Interest**

Located in the second back row of the village, the ancestral hall is facing north-west as the other village houses in the village. It is a Qing (清) vernacular building having a two-hall-one-courtyard plan. The open courtyard is between the entrance and main halls. It is constructed of green bricks and mud bricks with its walls to support its pitched roofs of timber rafters, purlins and clay tiles. The walls are plastered. The altar occupies the entire end wall of the main hall housing a soul tablet of the Sung ancestors for worship. A Kwun Yam (觀音) image is also worshipped at the altar. The gable walls of the entrance hall are in rectangular shape. A pair of red geometric mouldings is at two ends of the front ridge. The name of the hall is moulded on the wall above the lintel of the recessed entrance. Wall paintings of landscape, flowers and birds are under the front roof. The doorframe is of granite.

**Architectural
Merit**

It is an ancestral hall of the Sung to witness their settlement in Kuk Po.

Rarity

It has little built heritage value.

**Built Heritage
Value**

It is in upkeep condition. Its authenticity is basically kept.

Authenticity

Although most of the Sung family have moved out the village, some do come back to worship their ancestors at the ancestral hall during the Chinese New Year. They had grave sweeping during the Chung Yeung (重陽節) and Ching Ming Festivals (清明節) at their ancestors' graves close to San Uk Ha where they distributed the pork after the ceremony instead of at the ancestral hall. The children of the Sung family studied at the Kai Choi School (啓才學校) in Kuk Po which had donations from the clan for its erection. Sung Sheung-yu (宋湘如), a member of the Sung family moved to Britain, was the first Chinese appointed to be a Justice of Peace in 1983. Wedding and funeral ceremonies were held at the hall. Dim Dang (點燈) ritual for new born baby boys of previous year was held at the hall on the 15th day of the Chinese New Year.

*Social Value,
& Local
Interest*