

Historic Building Appraisal
Hung Shing Temple
Shek Tsai Po Street, Tai O, Lantau

Hung Shing Temple (洪聖古廟) in Shek Tsai Po Street (石仔步街) of Tai O (大澳), Lantau, was built in the 11th year of the Qianlong (乾隆, 1746) reign of the Qing (清) dynasty as a bell in the temple has the year inscribed on it. Tai O was a village of fishing and salt production. Its salt was famous as far back as in the Song (宋, 960-1279) dynasty. Hung Shing has been the most popular sea deity worshipped by the fishermen, boat people and sea-farers after Tin Hau (天后).

Historical Interest

The temple is a Qing vernacular building having a two-hall-one-courtyard plan of three bays. The courtyard in the middle bay has been covered. A low boundary wall is at the far end of its entrance with an open foreground in between. The building is constructed of green bricks with its walls and columns to support its pitched roofs of timber rafters, purlins and clay tiles. The external walls and roofs have been plastered. The walls are with white paint whilst its roofs and ridges are respectively with green and red paints. The altar at the end wall of the middle bay houses the statue of Hung Shing in the middle with God of Wealth (財帛星君) and Yue Tau Tai Wong (魚頭大王) on his left and right. The lower courses of its front walls are with granite blocks and so is its doorframe. The stone lintel above the doorway is engraved with the name of the temple. Its wall friezes above the lintel are with flower and landscape motifs and the Eight Immortals (八仙). The fascia board under the eave is with flowers and plants carvings. Its ridge is decorated with two ceramic *aoyus* (鰲魚) and a red pearl.

Architectural Merit

It is a Hung Shing temple to witness the settlement of Tai O.

Rarity

It has some built heritage value.

Built Heritage Value

The temple was renovated in 1802, 1841, 1875, 1930, 1969 and 1995. Its authenticity is basically kept.

Authenticity

Hung Shing Festival (洪聖誕) on the 13th of the second lunar month was celebrated with lion dance, Cantonese opera performances (神功戲) and basin meals. The celebration has been much downgraded due to many of the villagers moved out of the area without adequate funding. The temple paid a role in the

Social Value, & Local Interest

old days in education when there was no proper school in Tai O. It was used as a venue to offer private tutorial classes for the children. The temple is managed by the Tai O Rural Committee (大澳鄉事委員會).