

Historic Building Appraisal
Shui Shin Temple
Stanley Main Street, Stanley, Hong Kong

Built on a rock terrace facing the sea to its west, the Shui Shin Temple (水僊(仙)古廟) in Stanley Main Street is dedicated to Shui Shin (水僊) deity. This temple was probably built during the reign of Emperor Qianlong (乾隆年間, 1736-1795) of Qing Dynasty. Shui Shin is a legendary water deity called Feng Yi (馮夷), who was conferred the title of River Lord after he was drowned in a river. Fishermen believe that Shui Shin could assure safe voyage, and homage is paid to the temple before they set off for fishing in the open sea. As most of the inhabitants in Stanley were fishing folks, they built the temple seeking the protection of the deity when they were in and out of Stanley. *Historical Interest*

The temple was managed by the Chinese Temples Committee (華人廟宇委員會) and is now delegated to the Committee of the Stanley Kaifong Welfare Advancement Association (赤柱街坊福利促進會). The Association was initially called Sin On Communal Hall (善安公所) established in the 1880s. In 1947, the name was changed to Land and Boat Residents Association (水陸居民聯愛會) and was renamed Stanley Kaifong Welfare Advancement Association in 1949.

Shui Shin Temple is a small Qing (清) vernacular building of a one-hall plan. It is probably constructed of bricks with its walls to support its pitched roofs of timber rafters and round fir purlins and clay tiles. Its roofs have been covered with green ceramic tiles. Its walls have been heavily plastered. Its slightly recessed entrance has granite front steps and wall corners. Its red relief name is above the lintel with the dating of guiyou (癸酉, 1993). Its ridge is also of green ceramic tiles. The wooden door is installed with the traditional wooden pivot and lock. The altar is at the end wall with a carved tablet of the deity displayed in the middle. Offering fruits and incense sticks are on the altar. A small open court is in front of the temple with an incinerator having a red roof top. *Architectural Merit*

It is the only Shui Shin temple in Hong Kong.

Rarity

The temple probably has some heritage value.

Built Heritage Value

The last renovation was in 1993.

Authenticity

Inhabitants and fishermen sought the protection of the deity from typhoons and other dangers, and for good catch. Choi Pak Shing Kun (財帛星君) is also worshipped at the temple for wealth. A paper plaque of Bodhiharma (達摩, an Indian Buddhist missionary in about AD 526 who became the First Patriarch of Eastern Buddhism) and a small statue of Kwan Tai (關帝, whose original name was Kwan Yu 關羽 or Kwan Wan Cheung 關雲長, a famous strategist in the Three Kingdoms Period 三國, A.D. 220-265 of the ancient China) are on display for their worship.

*Social Value,
& Local
Interest*

Shui Shin Temple and Pai Tai Temple (北帝廟) are built on the two headlands of Stanley Bay respectively, it seems that they are a pair of bay-watchers to protect the boats in the Bay. The façade of the Temple oriented towards the mountain behind the headlands of Stanley Bay, it may be related to the *fung shui* setting. There are also other temples nearby; for example, Tin Hau Temple and Tai Wong Temple.

Group Value

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

*Adaptive
Re-use*