

Historic Building Appraisal

Hip Tin Temple

Shing Mun San Tsuen, Kam Tin, Yuen Long

Shing Mun San Tsuen (城門新村) in Kam Tin (錦田), Yuen Long, is a ***Historical Interest*** single-clan village of the Chengs (鄭) who were moved away from the Shing Mun Valley (城門谷) by the government in the late 1920s for the construction of the Shing Mun Reservoir (城門水塘). The village houses for 84 families built by the government were completed in 1930. Together with the village houses, a Hip Tin Temple (協天宮) was removed and rebuilt in a site a short distant away from the houses. Kwan Tai (關帝) is the main deity of the temple. He is a mythical general known for his bravery, loyalty and righteousness. He is also known as Hip Tin Tai Tai (協天大帝, Emperor assisting the Heaven) and so the temple is called Hip Tin Temple. Kwun Yam (觀音) and Pao Kung (包公) deities are housed in the left bay of the main hall. The right side bay of the main hall houses a soul tablet of a number of the village martyrs who were sacrificed in a fight with those of the Tsuen Wan Heung (荃灣鄉) for three years in the Tongchi (同治, 1862-1864) reign, of the Qing (清) dynasty.

It is built on a slightly raised platform facing southwest. The temple is a Qing ***Architectural Merit*** vernacular building of a two-hall-one-courtyard plan of three bays. The courtyard is between the entrance and the main halls. The entrance hall is flanked by two side rooms for the keeper's quarters. A kitchen was later added to the left of the courtyard. The building is constructed of green bricks with its walls to support its flush gable pitched roofs of timber rafters, purlins and clay tiles. The brickwork of the walls is in a nine stretcher courses to one header course (九順一丁) bonding. The walls internally and externally are plastered. The floors are cement screeded. At the recessed entrance above the doorway is the name board of the temple. Its front façade is with wall friezes of calligraphy and paintings of landscape and stories depicting the story of Kwan Tai. Its ridges are each with a set of two geometric mouldings. The altar of the Kwan Tai deity occupies the entire end wall of the main hall facing the entrance at the opposite end of the building.

It is a temple of the Chengs to witness their settlement in Kam Tin moved ***Rarity*** from the Shing Mun Valley.

The temple has some built heritage value.

Built Heritage Value

The building was renovated in 1972, 1979, 1990 and 1999. The building has *Authenticity* been kept with minor defects which can be improved.

Kwan Tai Festival (關帝誕) on the 24th day of the sixth lunar month will be *Social Value,* highly celebrated by the villagers with special offerings. The temple has been *& Local* more popular than the ancestral hall of the Chengs where wedding has been held *Interest* in the temple. A temple keeper used to take care of the building before the 1990s. After his death, it is done by a volunteer of the village.