

Historic Building Appraisal
Chu Ancestral Hall
No. 15 Kai Kuk Shue Ha, Luk Keng

Kai Kuk Shue Ha (雞谷樹下) village is situated between Luk Keng (鹿頸) and Kuk Po (谷埔). It is a Hakka (客家) village of the Chus (朱) and the Lams (藍). The Chus were from Xinan (新安) of Guangdong (廣東) who settled in Luk Keng in the 8th year of the Kangxi (康熙, 1669) reign of the Qing (清) dynasty. Chu Yu-sin (朱愈先) was the founding ancestor of the Chus. He moved to Kai Kuk Shue Ha next year due to *fung shui* reason. Some of the Chus later branched out to Ho Lek Pui (河瀝背) village in the south-east. It is not known when the Chu Ancestral Hall (朱氏祖祠) was built. It was built probably in the late 17th century the earliest. The ancestral hall is also known as Pui Kwok Tong (沛國堂) as it is to commemorate their second generation ancestor, Chu Pui-kwok (朱沛國).

***Historical
Interest***

Located in an alignment of village houses in the village, the ancestral hall is facing south as the other houses. It is connected to houses on either side. The ancestral hall is a Qing 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 with its walls to support its pitched roofs of timber rafters, purlins and clay tiles. Parts of the walls are plastered. The roof of the entrance hall is reinforced with concrete. The ceramic-tiled altar occupies the entire end wall of the main hall housing a soul tablet of the Chu ancestors for worship. A Kwun Yam (觀音) statue is on the left of the tablet also for worship. No decoration is on the front ridge. The name of the hall is engraved on a piece of brown marble above the lintel. The front façade of the hall is covered with ceramic tiles.

***Architectural
Merit***

It is an ancestral hall to remind the settlement of the Chus in Kai Kuk Shue Ha village.

Rarity

It has little built heritage value.

***Built Heritage
Value***

The building was renovated in 1979 and 1996. The building has been modernized with modern building materials added to the building. Its authenticity is diminished.

Authenticity

Chu Lai (朱來), a member of the Chus, was a marine guerrilla of the Hong Kong Independent Battalion of the East River Column (東江縱隊港九獨立大隊) during the Japanese Occupation (1941-45). He was killed by the Japanese in Tai Long Hau (大浪口) in Sai Kung. The village children studied at the Man Lam School (文林學校) in Luk Keng in the 1930s and later at the Luk Keng Public School (鹿頸公立學校), built on the campus of the Man Lam School with better facility, in 1952. Most of the villagers have moved overseas and out of the village leaving a few villagers in the village. Ancestral worship is still held at the ancestral hall especially at the Chinese New Year. 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. The villagers participate in the Da Chiu (打醮) activity organized once every ten years in the area. The last one was in 2001.

*Social Value,
& Local Interest*