

Historic Building Appraisal
Law Ancestral Hall
Kan Tau Tsuen, Fanling

Kan Tau Tsuen (簡頭村) is on the southern side of Sha Tau Kok Road (沙頭角道) in Ping Che (坪輦). The village was inhabited by the Punti (本地) Laws (羅) and Hakka (客家) Laus (劉) and Ngs (吳). The Laws first moved to Ping Shan Chai (平山仔) near Sha Lo Tung (沙羅洞) and then to Hok Tau Pai (鶴藪排). They moved northward again to Tan Chuk Hang (丹竹坑) about 300 years ago. The 18th generation ancestor Law Yu-choi (羅汝材) branched out to Kan Tau Tsuen around 140 years ago. The Law Ancestral Hall (羅氏家祠) is a family one built probably before 1924 by Ying-in (英賢) and Sai-fan (世勳), two brothers of the 22nd generation ancestors. The hall was constructed in the middle bay of a block of building. The two side bays were for the residences of the two brothers.

**Historical
Interest**

The ancestral hall is in the middle bay of a block of three-bay building. In the old days, side entrances were opened to the two residences of the two brothers. The side entrances were blocked up in the 1930s. The hall is a Qing (清) vernacular building having a two-hall-one-courtyard plan. The open courtyard is in the middle of the entrance and main halls. The building is constructed of green bricks with its walls to support its pitched roofs of timber rafters, purlins and clay tiles. Granite is used for its doorframe, steps, kerbs and wall corners. The floors are cement-screeded. The walls of the entire hall are still with fair-faced green bricks. The finely-carved wooden altar occupies the entire end wall housing a big soul tablet of the Law ancestors for worship. A tablet of Kwun Yam (觀音) is also on the left of the altar for worship. The name of the hall is only written on a piece of red paper pasted on the lintel at the recessed entrance. Wall frieze paintings are under the front eave with calligraphy, chickens, landscape and chrysanthemum. A pair of red *ruilong* (夔龍) mouldings is at the two ends of the front ridge.

**Architectural
Merit**

It is an ancestral hall of the Laws to witness their settlement in Kan Tau Tsuen.

Rarity

It has some built heritage value.

**Built Heritage
Value**

The building was repaired in 2002. The authenticity is kept.

Authenticity

The two Law brothers were successful merchants engaged in the trading of fish and rice and the production of mooncakes. Ying-in and Sai-fan died respectively in 1940 and 1941. Law Chak-tong (羅澤棠), son of Sai-fan, was one of the founders of the Fanling Rural Committee (粉嶺鄉事委員會) and its chairman after 1969. He was also the principal of the Tan Chuk Hang Public School (丹竹坑公立學校) between 1961 and 1981. The hall has ancestral worship with special offerings at the Chinese New Year and at the Chung Yeung Festival (重陽節). Dim Dang (點燈) ritual has been discontinued at the hall after the War.

*Social Value,
& Local Interest*