

Historic Building Appraisal

Shrine

Pan Chung, Tai Po

The shrine (神廳) of Pan Chung (泮涌) village in Tai Po was built when the walled *Historical Interest* village was constructed in the late 17th century. Together with the shrine, an enclosing wall and an entrance gate opposite the shrine were built to protect the village from attack made by the bandits, privates and other enemies. The shrine housing the Earth God (土地) has been the protector of the villagers which they believe would ward off all evils. The Maks (麥) has been the major clan of the village whose ancestors moved from Baoan (寶安) of Guangdong (廣東) province to Wun Yiu (碗窑) to its south in the late Ming (明, 1368-1644) dynasty. The 10th generation ancestor of the Maks, Shing-ki (盛祈), and his 10 brothers founded the village.

The shrine is a Qing (清) vernacular building of a one-hall plan. It is at the back *Architectural Merit* row of the wall on the central axis of the village opposite the entrance gate at the front wall. It was constructed of green bricks with its walls to support the pitched roofs of timber rafters, purlins and clay tiles. The walls have been plastered and floors cement screeded. The altar is in the middle of the main hall with an offering table in its front. The recessed entrance is without any decoration but a black wall frieze with a red bordering running to the gables and back wall of the building.

It is a shrine to remind the settlement of the some 300-year old village.

Rarity

It has some built heritage value.

Built Heritage Value

The shrine has been renovated. Its authenticity is barely kept.

Authenticity

The Maks were engaged in the production of blue-and-white porcelain wares of *Social Value, & Local Interest* Wun Yiu which were exported to many countries in the Southeast Asia. They were also engaged in agricultural farming who sold their produce in the old Tai Po Market (大埔舊墟) and later in the Tai Wo Market (太和市) opposite the old market. The Earth God is with a red paper only without and statue. A total of 37 households take turns to take care of the shrine and other minor shrines of the village. On the 15th day of the first lunar month, a lantern shed would be put up at the shrine for worship. Those with new born babies of previous year would bring along offerings and a lantern for each boy hanged at the shed. It will last for three days.