

Historic Building Appraisal

Saam Wo Tong

No. 15 Wong Nai Tun Tsuen, Shap Pat Heung, Yuen Long

Wong Nai Tun Tsuen (黃泥墩村) is in the far south of Shap Pat Heung (十八鄉), Yuen Long. It was occupied by the Hos (何) first and then the Yus (俞) and the Lais (賴) some 100 to 150 years ago. They are both Hakkas (客家) and the Hos have their ancestors from Jiangxi (江西) province. Saam Wo Tong (三和堂) was erected in the late 1940s by the villagers to replace a *tsotong* (祖堂) demolished before the Japanese Occupation (1941-45). The *tsotong* has a history of over a hundred years old. It was used as a place of meeting and discussing matters concerning the benefits of the village. The Tong has ceased its function when the Wong Nai Tun Tsuen Village Office (黃泥墩村村公所) was established in 1997 in the village.

**Historical
Interest**

The Tong is on the left end of the village. It is a detached building of Qing vernacular design having a two-hall plan. A kitchen was later added to its right end. It is constructed of green bricks with its walls to support its pitched roofs of timber rafters, purlins and clay tiles. The walls are plastered and the floors cement-screeded. The entrance is on the left bay which houses a hall where Kwan Tai (關帝) and Tin Hau (天后) deities are worshipped. The images of the two deities are placed on a simple wooden table at the end wall of the hall. The right bay is a hall with a mezzanine floor. It has a side entrance for access to the kitchen. The name of the hall is moulded on the wall above the lintel of the recessed entrance. Under the front eave are wall frieze paintings of landscape, flowers and rocks.

**Architectural
Merit**

It is a communal hall of the villagers to witness their settlement in the village.

Rarity

It has little built heritage value.

**Built Heritage
Value**

The authenticity is kept.

Authenticity

It has group value with the ancestral halls of the Hos and the Lais in the village.

Group Value

The altar of Kwan Tai at the main hall was established to settle disputes among the villagers and together with the Tin Hau deity to give blessing to the villagers. The *tsotong* was also an assembling place of the villagers in

**Social Value,
& Local Interest**

preparation of battles with the neighbouring Tai Tong Tsuen (大棠村) and Pak Sha Tsuen (白沙村) on the control of the irrigation water. The Tong was also used to house a Saam Wo Kindergarten (三和幼稚園) in the 1960s for the children aged three to four. The children would then go to study at the Kai Ming School (啓明學校) in the village. After which they would go to study at the Kwong Ming School (光明學校) in Tai Kei Leng Tsuen (大旗嶺村) in the north of Shap Pat Heung. Basin meals (盆菜) were held at the Tong for celebration of wedding and others.