

**Historic Building Appraisal**  
**Si Tak Chung Ancestra Hall**  
**Chung Uk Tsuen, Tai Po**

Chung Uk Tsuen (鍾屋村) is a Punti (本地) village of the Chungs (鍾). It is one of the 26 villages in Lam Tsuen Valley (林村谷), Tai Po. The Chungs originated in Jiangxi (江西) province. They moved from Nanxiong (南雄) of Shaoguan (韶關), Guangdong (廣東) province, to the valley in the last years of the Southern Song (南宋, 1127-1279) dynasty. The Chungs first worked for the Maos (毛) who were the earliest settlers of the village. They later became the indigenous villagers of the valley. The valley did not have much population until the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and early 18<sup>th</sup> century inhabited by the Hakkas (客家) moved from the mainland. The Si Tak Chung Ancestral Hall (鍾師德堂) was first built some 300 years ago.

*Historical  
Interest*

The ancestral hall is a tall Qing (清) vernacular building having a two-hall-one-courtyard plan of three bays. The open courtyard is between the entrance and main halls. Side chambers are on either side of the middle bay. The chamber on the left of the entrance hall is used for its kitchen and the right one is for a storeroom. The building 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 part of them with ceramic tiles. The floors are also with ceramic tiles. The finely-carved wooden altar is at the end wall of the middle bay housing a big soul tablet of the Chung ancestors for worship. The name of the hall is engraved on a piece of brown stone above the lintel. The ridges are with curling ends decorated with auspicious treasures, and flowers mouldings. Fascia boards under the eaves and wall frieze mouldings are of flowers, birds and calligraphy.

*Architectural  
Merit*

It is an ancestral hall of the Chungs to witness their settlement in the village.

*Rarity*

It has some built heritage value.

*Built Heritage  
Value*

The building was renovated in 1965 and 1997. The building has been modernized with ceramic tiles, aluminium windows and others though with its major features retained. The authenticity has been diminished.

*Authenticity*

The ancestral hall has been the place for ancestral worship of the Chungs for years. It has been used for worship with special offerings at the Chinese New Year and at the Ching Ming (清明節) and Chung Yeung Festivals (重陽節). Dim Dang (點燈) ritual is held at the 15<sup>th</sup> of the first lunar month. The hall was used as

*Social Value,  
& Local Interest*

a study hall for the teaching of children in the village and those nearby. It was also used as a temporary school of the Lam Tsuen Public School (林村公立學校) and the Luk Tak Study Hall (六德書室) in Tai Om (大菴) after the Second World War. It was used to house a kindergarten called Kai Man Kindergarten (啓文幼稚園) from 1975 to the 1987.