

## Historic Building Appraisal

### Kwun Yam Temple

#### Ta Tit Yan, Tai Po

Kwun Yam Temple (觀音宮) in Ta Tit Yan (打鐵坳) village, Tai Po, was built by villagers of the village before the 33<sup>rd</sup> year of the Guangxu (光緒, 1907) reign of the Qing (清) dynasty as a stone tablet in the temple records its renovation with the dating. Ta Tit Yan in the south of Tai Po Market (大埔墟) and east of Tai Mo Shan (大帽山) was founded some three hundred years ago inhabited by five families surnamed Wong (黃), Lai (賴), Ho (何), Yau (邱) and Lin (練). The temple was erected for the worship of the Kwun Yam deity when villagers saw her sitting at the site of temple when they were on their way to the Tai Po Market where they went to get their daily necessities. It was then built with money donated by the villagers. The roof of the temple was destroyed by a fire in 1979 and was repaired in 1980.

*Historical Interest*

The temple is a Qing vernacular building of a two-hall-one-courtyard plan of asymmetrical design. The narrow courtyard is between the entrance and the main halls. The building is constructed of green bricks with its walls to support its flush gable pitched roofs of timber rafters, purlins and clay tiles. A compartment of equal length is to the left. Its front portion is for the kitchen of the temple whilst its rear is for the keeper's quarters. The altar which houses the statue of the temple is in the middle of the main hall with an offering table in its front. The temple is plastered internally and externally except the front façade of the entrance. Above the doorway of the recessed entrance is the name board of the temple. The ridges of the main compartment are each with a pair of circular geometric mouldings.

*Architectural Merit*

It is a Kwun Yam temple to witness the settlement of the Ta Tit Yan village.

*Rarity*

It has little built heritage value.

*Built Heritage Value*

It was repaired in 1980. Its upkeep and maintenance is in order. Its authenticity is kept.

*Authenticity*

The temple would be highly celebrated at the Kwun Yam Festival (觀音誕) on the 19<sup>th</sup> day of the second lunar month when village worshippers would make special offerings to the deity. They would also have vegetarian meal on that day. Villagers would also seek blessing and protection from Kwun Yam during the Chinese New Year.

*Social Value, & Local Interest*