

## Historic Building Appraisal

### Chung Ancestral Hall

#### Chai Kek, Tai Po

Chai Kek (寨𨵿) is one of the 26 villages in Lam Tsuen Valley (林村谷), Tai Po. It is a Hakka (客家) village of the Chungs (鍾). Their founding ancestor Sze-chap (仕集) moved from Changle (長樂) of Guangdong (廣東) province in the 12<sup>th</sup> year of Chongzhen (崇禎, 1639) of the late Ming (明) dynasty. One of his descendents, Man-Tsoi (文彩), branched out to Tin Liu Ha (田寮下) village (now divided into Sheung (Upper) and Ha (Lower) villages), in the northern part of the Lam Tsuen Valley in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is not known when the Chung Ancestral Hall (鍾氏家祠) was built. It was probably in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century.

**Historical  
Interest**

Located in two long parallel rows of village houses, the ancestral hall occupies the structures of two houses, one in front of the other. This alignment is very unusual for an ancestral hall. It was an extension of the hall making use of two houses about 200 years ago. The ancestral hall is connected to the four houses on its left and right sharing with them a common roof each for its entrance and main halls. The long and narrow hall is a Qing (清) vernacular building having a three-hall-two-courtyard plan. The two open courtyards are between the three halls. The inner courtyard has side entrances on its left and right. The *dong chung* (擋中) is at the middle hall whilst the altar is at the end wall of the main hall. The building is constructed of green bricks with its walls and granite columns to support the pitched roofs of timber rafters, purlins and clay tiles. The altar has a soul tablet of the Chung ancestors for worship. The ridges are each with a pair of *ruilong* (夔龍) mouldings. The roofs are covered with green glazed tiles. The front façade is covered with white glazed ceramic tiles. 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 fruits, flowers and rocks. Wall frieze paintings of geometric and curling leaves patterns are under the eave of the main hall.

**Architectural  
Merit**

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

**Rarity**

It has some built heritage value.

**Built Heritage  
Value**

The building was repaired in 1980 and 1995. Despite the glazed tiles added to the roofs and front façade, the authenticity of the building is kept.

**Authenticity**

The ancestral hall has been a venue for the ancestral worship of the Chung. The Chung in Tin Liu Ha returned at the Chung Yeung Festival (重陽節) on the 9<sup>th</sup> of the ninth lunar month to have ancestral worship at the hall. They stopped joining their brother Chungs to do so when they built their own ancestral hall in the 1960s. They however do have joint grave sweeping of their ancestors' graves at the festival in Tsuen Wan. The hall is also used for meetings and celebrations of the Chungs. Wedding ceremonies have been held at the hall. The Chungs have their worship of the Tin Hau at the Tin Hau Temple (天后古廟) in Fong Ma Po (放馬莆) village, upper part of Lam Tsuen Valley. They also joined in the activities of the Da Chiu (打醮) to honour the Tin Hau.

*Social Value,  
& Local Interest*