

Historic Building Appraisal
Chan Ancestral Hall
Lung Mei, Tai Po, New Territories

Lung Mei (龍尾) is a Hakka (客家) village on the northern shore of Plover Cove (船灣), Tai Po, and in the west of Tai Mei Tuk (大尾督). It was established before the 11th year of the reign of Emperor Yongzheng (雍正, 1733) of Qing (清) Dynasty and settled by the Chans (陳), the Lees (李) and the Cheungs (張). Being the biggest clan, the Chans came from Meixian country of Guangdong province (廣東梅縣). The Chan Ancestral Hall (陳氏宗祠) in Lung Mei is also called Kau Yu Tong (九裕堂). Records show that this ancestral hall, which had been in existence before 1905, was renovated in 1929 and 1966 and then rebuilt in 2004.

**Historical
Interest**

The ancestral hall is built in front of a *fung shui* grove of a small hill facing south. It is in a strange plan like the shape of the Chinese character “凸” inverted upside down. This might be the result of the three-bay building having the side rooms of its entrance hall removed. The building is a Qing vernacular building having a two-hall-one-courtyard plan of three bays. The three bays apply to the courtyard and the main hall only. The open courtyard is in-between the entrance and main halls. A side chamber is on either side of the main hall. Except the front façade, the walls are plastered and the floors with cement screeding. The altar is in the middle of the end wall housing a soul tablet of the Chan ancestors for worship. A tablet of the Kwum Yam (觀音) deity is also on the left for worship. A big Chinese character “壽” (longevity) written on a piece of red paper is pasted on the wall behind the soul tablet. Wall frieze paintings and calligraphy are at the end wall. Wall frieze paintings are under the eave of the main hall. The name of the hall is moulded above the lintel of the recessed entrance. On either side of the name board are wall paintings of similar topics.

**Architectural
Merit**

It is an ancestral hall of the Chans to witness their settlement in the village. Two ancestral halls of the Lees and the Cheungs collapsed about 40 years ago.

Rarity

The building had undergone renovations in 1929 and 1966. It was rebuilt in 2004.

**Built Heritage
Value &
Authenticity**

Other than used as a place for ancestral worship, the hall was also used for holding the Dim Dang (點燈) ritual for the new born baby boys of previous year on the 2nd day of the Chinese New Year to signify their rights of inheritance. The family of each boy would light a lantern and make offerings to the ancestors at the hall. After the ritual, the villagers would hold banquet at the hall and in the village. Ancestral worship would also be held at the hall at other festivals including Ching Ming (清明節), Chung Yeung (重陽節), Mid-Autumn (中秋節) and Spring and Autumn Rites (春秋二祭). The side chambers of the hall were used as a place for teaching village children in the 1940s. It housed a kindergarten for about two years starting from 2002.

***Social Value,
& Local Interest***

Today, most of the houses in Lung Mei are reconstructed into modern *ding uks* (丁屋 small houses), leaving Chan Ancestral Hall one of the sole remnants of this historic village. The continued existence of the Chan Ancestral Hall and the house on Nos. 13-14 (an Antiquities Monuments Office recorded item), after many years of dynamic urban development in the immediate vicinity, is quite remarkable. Besides, the house is also close to other historic buildings graded by the Antiquities Advisory Board such as Ta Tit Yan Kwun Yum Temple (打鐵坳觀音宮) and Ting Kok Mo Tai Temple (汀角武帝宮). Other recorded items in the Antiquities and Monuments Office include the Lee Ancestral Hall in Ting Kok (汀角李氏家祠), Wong Ancestral Hall in Tai Mei Tuk (大尾篤黃氏宗祠) and Nos. 52-57 in Wong Chuk Tsuen (黃竹村). All these buildings have a good value from a heritage point of view.

Group Value