

Historic Building Appraisal
Wan Gau Study Hall
Loi Tung, Sha Tau Kok

Loi Tung (萊洞) village was called Lai Tung Tsuen (黎峒村) occupied by the Lais (黎) and had been called Sheung Lai Tung (上黎峒, Upper Lai Tung). The village was renamed by the Tangs (鄧) as Loi Tung after the Second World War. A village on the opposite side of Sha Tau Kok Road (沙頭角路) occupied by the Tangs was called Ha Lai Tung (下黎峒, Lower Lai Tung). The Tangs told the Japanese soldiers during the War that the village was called Tai Tong Wu (大塘湖) and the village has been called such since then. Wan Gau Study Hall (允教書室) in Loi Tung village, west of Wo Hang (禾坑), Sha Tau Kok (沙頭角), was built by the Tangs of the village to commemorate their 17th generation ancestor Tang Wan-gau (鄧允教, 1650-1720). It is said that Wan-gau was a scholar and an ancestor who led the villagers returning to the village after the lifting of the Evacuation Edict (遷海令, 1662-1669) in the Qing (清, 1644-1911) dynasty. During the period, the village was within the evacuation boundary and the buildings of the village had to be destroyed and left deserted like other villages. The villagers had to move inland 50 *lis* (Chinese miles). The Tangs in Loi Tung village are the descendents of Tang Yuk (鄧玉) and Tang Tong (鄧堂) branched out from the Tangs in Tai Po Tau (大埔頭). Wan Gau Study Hall was one of the three local private schools for the village children. It is not known when it was built, but it is believed to have a history of about 100 years. The building has been left abandoned for a long time and fell into ruin.

Historical Interest

The building is probably a Qing vernacular building having a two-hall-one-courtyard plan of three bays. The main hall is the teaching room and a cockloft might be provided at the main hall as the teacher's quarters. The building was constructed of green bricks with its walls to support its pitched roofs of timber rafters, purlins and clay tiles. The wall is of a seven stretchers to one course of headers bonding (七順一丁). The main ridge is with a curling ending. The name of the study hall is moulded on the wall above the door entrance.

Architectural Merit

It was a study hall of the Tangs in Loi Tung village to remind their settlement in the area.

Rarity

It has little built heritage value.

Built Heritage Value

It is in ruin leaving little authenticity.

Authenticity

It has group value with the Ding Yat Study Hall (定一家塾) in the village. *Group Value*

The study hall provided education for village children of the Tangs. The teacher was employed from mainland China. The study hall premises provided quarters for the teacher where he could sleep and eat in the hall. Chinese classics, mathematics and calligraphy were taught to the students so that they could get prepared for the Imperial Civil Service Examination. Some of the Tangs did acquire the *xiucai* (秀才) title. When modern education was introduced, it gradually faded out of the education role in the area. The children went to Kok Man School (覺民學校) in Tan Chuk Hang (丹竹坑) and the Sha Tau Kok Public School (沙頭角官立學校) instead. *Social Value, & Local Interest*