

Historic Building Appraisal
Leung Ancestral Hall
Pak Ngau Shek Sheung Tsuen, Tai Po

Pak Ngau Shek Sheung Tsuen (白牛石上村) is a Hakka (客家) village of the Leungs (梁) in Lam Tsuen Valley (林村谷), Tai Po. It is one of the 26 villages in the valley. The Leungs settled in Dongguan (東莞) of Guangdong (廣東) province three hundred years ago and moved to Tso Po (草莆) of Shenzhen (深圳). They went to Ma Po Mei (麻布尾) village of Lam Tsuen first in the early 18th century and then moved to Pak Ngau Shek (白牛石). Part of the Leungs however split to Pak Ngau Shek Sheung Tsuen in the south and Leung Uk Tsuen (梁屋村) in Pat Heung (八鄉), Yuen Long, due to the shortage of land. It is not known when the Leung Ancestral Hall (梁氏宗祠) was built. It has a history of more than a hundred years.

*Historical
Interest*

Located in two parallel rows of village houses, the ancestral hall occupies the structures of two unconnected houses, one in front of the other. A lane is between the two rows of houses. This alignment is very unusual for an ancestral hall. It was probably an extension of the hall making use of two houses. The ancestral hall was connected to four houses on its left and right. The long and narrow hall is a Qing (清) vernacular building having a two-hall plan. The front hall is in the front row whilst the main hall is in the rear row. 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 walls except the front façade are plastered and the floors are cement-screeded. The altar has a soul tablet of the Leung ancestors for worship. The front ridge is in boat-shape and has curling ends. A pair of *ruilong* (夔龍) mouldings is at its two corner ends. The main hall is with another pair of *ruilong* mouldings of different design at its two ends. The name of the hall is moulded on the wall above the lintel of the recessed entrance. Under the front eave are weathered wall frieze paintings of flowers and rocks.

*Architectural
Merit*

It is an ancestral hall to witness the settlement of the Leungs in Pak Ngau Sheung Tsuen.

Rarity

The ancestral hall making use of two unconnected village houses is rare having some built heritage value.

*Built Heritage
Value*

The building was renovated in the 1890s and the 1970s. The building is not maintained properly. The authenticity is not likely to be kept if it continues to be deteriorating. *Authenticity*

The ancestral hall is primarily used for ancestral worship of the Leung ancestors. It was also used for wedding and funeral of the Leungs. Basin meals would be served at the hall after the celebration of wedding and worship at the Chinese New Year. Dim Dang (點燈) ritual would be held at the hall for new born baby boys of previous year on the 15th of the first lunar month. The practice has been discontinued in the 1960s. *Social Value, & Local Interest*