

Historic Building Appraisal

Tin Hau Temple

No. 41 Hung Kiu San Tsuen, Sheung Shui, New Territories

Tin Hau Temple (天后古廟) in Hung Kiu San Tsuen (紅橋新村) of Sheung Shui was built for the worship of Tin Hau (Goddess of the Sea) who protect the ships which sailed along Ng Tung River (梧桐河) linked to Starling Inlet, or Sha Tau Kok Hoi (沙頭角海) and the inhabitants nearby. The exact year of construction of the temple cannot be ascertained, but a stone tablet in memory of the rebuilding of the temple in 1962 shows that the original temple was built in the early Ming (明) Dynasty. There is also a bell dated the 60th year of the reign of Emperor Kangxi (康熙, 1721) of Qing (清) Dynasty. *Historical Interest*

This temple is said to be built by Yi Ngam Tso (義菴祖) of the Liu (廖) clan of Sheung Shui. Liu Yi-ngam was the eldest son of Liu Ying-man (廖應文), the fourth generation ancestor of the Liu clan. Their founding ancestor, Liu chung-kit (廖仲傑), moved from Fujian (福建) to Guangdong (廣東) in the middle years of Yuan Dynasty (元朝, 1279-1368). He first moved to Tuen Mun (屯門) during Ming Dynasty (明朝, 1368-1644), then to Futian (福田), a village north of Shenzhen River (深圳河), and finally settled along Sheung Yue River (雙魚河) where his descendants later widely scattered.

The temple is a two-hall-one-courtyard Qing vernacular building of a rectangular plan. The roofed courtyard is between the main and entrance halls. The 1962 rebuilt temple is constructed of bricks and concrete with its walls to support its pitched roofs. Its roofs have been turned into reinforced concrete ones covered with glazed ceramic tiles. Its external walls are plastered with imitation brick lines. The statue of the Tin Hau deity is in the middle of the altar. In front of the altar are two demons of Tin Hau, the Qianliyan (千里眼) and Shunfenger (順風耳). Tai Sui (太歲) and Earth God (土地) deities are respectively on the left and right chambers of the main hall. The main ridge is with 'A Pair of Dragons Competing a Pearl' (雙龍爭珠) ceramic decoration. Wall friezes in its front façade are with wall paintings of bats, a dragon, flowers and plants. The left and right chambers of the main hall are decorated with wall paintings of a unicorn and a deer respectively. *Architectural Merit*

It is a temple to witness the settlement of the Liu clan and others in the area. *Rarity*

It has some built heritage value.

*Built Heritage
Value*

The temple was renovated in 1937 and built in 1962. Further renovations were carried out in 1983 and 1996.

Authenticity

Tin Hau Festival (天后誕) on the 23rd day of the third lunar month would be celebrated by members of the Liu clan and other villagers. They would hold vegetarian meals and distribute roast pork in the forecourt of the temple.

*Social Value,
& Local
Interest*

It is considered that the question of adaptive re-use does not arise at the present time.

*Adaptive
Re-use*