

Historic Building Appraisal
Ng Kwai Tong
No. 1 Hang Tau Tsuen, Ping Shan, Yuen Long

Ng Kwai Tong (五桂堂) is a sub-family ancestral Hall in Hang Tau Tsuen (坑頭村) of Ping Shan (屏山), Yuen Long. It was built by the descendents of Tang Zai-lung (鄧際隆, 1636-1712) probably in 1822 to commemorate his five sons, namely, Ying-shui (應燾), Ying-yim (應琰), Ying-sin (應王星), Ying-ki (應琦) and Ying-wai (應瑋). Ng Kwai literally means five cassias, symbolizing the five brothers. Zai-lung was the 17th generation ancestor of the Tang clan which 8th generation ancestor Man-li (萬里) settled in Ping Shan in the Song dynasty (宋, 960-1279). Wai-tak (懷德), the 14th generation ancestor, became the first generation ancestor of Hang Tau Tsuen (village) branched out from the clan due to the increase of clan population in Ping Shan. The main family ancestral hall in Hang Tau Tsuen is Yin Yik Tong (燕翼堂) and Ng Kwai Tong serves as one for the branched families of Zai-lung.

Historical Interest

Ng Kwai Tong is a medium size ancestral hall compared with the bigger ones to its left, the Tang Ancestral Hall (鄧氏宗祠) for the entire clan in Ping Shan and Yu Liu Ancestral Hall (愈喬二公祠). It is in Qing (清) vernacular design having two halls and one courtyard in between. The building had a major renovation in 1971 having its walls and columns plastered and roofs reinforced with concrete. Its roofs are still in pitched appearance. The altar at the main hall in the middle houses three rows of soul tablets for worship. The wooden carved altar is the most decorative item of the building. Above it is the name board of Ng Kwai Tong. The ridge of the entrance hall is with a set of geometric moulding and auspicious floral and treasures patterns in the middle.

Architectural Merit

It is a family ancestral hall to signify the development of Ping Shan.

Rarity

It has some built heritage value despite it has been heavily plastered and concreted.

Built Heritage Value

The renovation in 1971 has very much diminished its authenticity.

Authenticity

The ancestral halls, study halls such as Kun Ting Study Hall (覲廷書室) and other historic buildings and structures and this ancestral hall in Ping Shan have co-related group value.

Group Value

Whilst the building serves as an ancestral hall for worship, only soul tablets of the 17th to 24th generation ancestors are on display due to limited space available. It was used as a study hall like many other ancestral halls in Ping Shan for children in the village aiming to gain success in the Imperial Civil Examination until its abolition in 1905. School lessons continued thereafter teaching Chinese classics and modern subjects until the Tat Tak Public School (公立達德學校) established at Yu Kiu Ancestral Hall in Hang Mei Tsuen (坑尾) in 1931. It was however used as classrooms of the School when the number of students increased in the 1950s.

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