

**Historic Building Appraisal**  
**Yeung Hau Temple**  
**San Wai, Ha Tsuen, Yuen Long**

Yeung Hau Temple (楊侯古廟) in the northwest of San Wai (新圍), *Historical Interest* originally called San Hing Wai (新慶圍), of Ha Tsuen (廈村) has a history of more than 400 years when the village was established. The village was founded by Tang Tso-tai (鄧作泰) and Tang Wai-yuk (鄧爲玉), the 18<sup>th</sup> generation of the Kam Tin Tang clan, whose 14<sup>th</sup> generation ancestors had branched out to Ha Tsuen from Kam Tin in the Hongwu reign (洪武, 1368-98) of the Ming (明) dynasty. The temple is also called the Sai Tau Miu (西頭廟, the western temple) together with another Yeung Hau temple in Tung Tau Tsuen (東頭村), Tung Tau Miu (東頭廟, the eastern temple), serving as two guarding temples protecting the entire Ha Tsuen Heung (廈村鄉). The Yeung Hau Temple in San Wai and an earth god shrine to its right give dual protection to the village in their south-east against bandits and evils.

The temple is a three-bay building with its main halls in the middle flanked *Architectural Merit* by one side chamber each on its left and right. The end hall has altars housing the Yeung Hau deity and others whilst the entrance is slightly recessed. The courtyard has been covered. To the left is an annex which probably is later added housing a kitchen. The main halls, the side chambers and the annex are about the same width. Much of the walls of the building have been replaced with concrete dressing and so are its roofs and floors. The main ridge is decorated with geometric and floral mouldings. The relief friezes at the façade and eave-boards have auspicious floral and zoological motifs and landscape decorations.

The humble Qing vernacular temple is one of the few Hau Wong temples *Rarity* survived to witness the lengthy history of the Tangs in Ha Tsuen.

Physically it is not a well-kept historic building very much diminishing its *Built Heritage Value & Authenticity* heritage value. The earliest dated renovation was on the 27<sup>th</sup> year of the Guangxu reign (光緒, 1901) as inscribed on a plaque. Recent repairs have stripped away much of its originality.

The temple and the nearby earth-god shrine have connected group value and *Group Value* so with another Hau Wong temple in Tung Tau Tsuen to a larger extent.

No large scale celebration for the Yeung Hau's birthday is held on the 18<sup>th</sup> *Social Value, & Local Interest* day of the eighth lunar month. Much will be celebrated during the Chinese New Year where the ceremony of Dim Dang (點燈, lighting up a lantern) will be

held. All the boys' names born in the previous year will be put on lit-up lanterns hanging at the temple. At the most celebrated Tai Ping Ching Chiu (太平清醮) of the 16 villages of Ha Tsuen held every 10 years, the Hau Wong deity will be placed on a sedan chair to 'watch' all the activities took place in different areas of Ha Tsuen.