

Historic Building Appraisal

Yip Ancestral Hall

Kau Shi Wai, Tai Po

The Yip Ancestral Hall (葉氏宗祠) in Kau Shi Wai (狗屎圍) village, is one of the five villages in Fung Yuen (鳳園), north-east of Tai Po. Kau Shi Wai, literally village of dogs' excrement had been an uninhabited wasteland before occupied by the Yips (葉氏), Hakkas (客家) from Wun Yiu (碗窑) whose original domicile was Shakengxiang (沙坑鄉) of Huiyang (惠陽), north-east of Guangdong (廣東) province. Yip Ching-mong (葉清望), the 19th generation ancestor of the Yips, was buried in Wun Yiu. His three sons moved to Fung Yuen Lo Tusen (鳳園老村), one of the five villages in Fung Yuen, some 400 years ago. Around the 1910s, they moved to Kau Shi Wai with the Suens (孫氏) from Ah Shan (鴉山) and the Lees (李氏) from Sha Lo Tung (沙螺洞) due to the spread of an infectious disease. The ancestral hall was built in 1924 by the Yips.

**Historical
Interest**

The ancestral hall was built with other village houses facing the sea to their south-east but now reclaimed. It is a one-hall small building of Qing (清) vernacular design. It is constructed of green bricks with a pitched roof composed of wooden rafters, purlins and clay tiles. In front of the recessed entrance is a forecourt surrounded by a low wall. The altar at the end of the hall in the middle is made of green bricks with an Earth God (土地) shrine at its bottom. The simple ancestral hall has no decoration for its ridge nor gable eaves but a black boarding on each of its gable.

**Architectural
Merit**

It is an ancestral hall of considerable rarity to demonstrate the historic changes of a Hakka village in the area.

Rarity

A simple Hakka ancestral hall of some built heritage value.

**Built
Heritage
Value**

The building was repaired in the 1980s and in 2000. Its authenticity is kept though parts of its walls have been plastered and floor concrete screeded.

Authenticity

Regular offerings are given on the 1st and 15th days of each lunar month to the soul tablets at the ancestral hall. Two incense offerings daily and offerings of chicken, pork and others are made during the first 15 days of the first lunar month of the Chinese New Year. Dim Dang (點燈) ritual for new born male babies in previous year would be held on the 7th or 8th day of the first lunar month and bridegrooms have to make special ritual to the soul tablets at the ancestral as a

**Social Value,
& Local
Interest**

matter of respecting their ancestors.