

Historic Building Appraisal

Tin Hau Temple

Sok Kwu Wan, Lamma Island

A Tin Hau Temple (天后宮) was first erected in Sok Kwu Wan (索罟灣) of Lamma Island (南丫島) in the 8th year of the Daoguang (道光, 1828) reign of the Qing (清) dynasty as a name plaque of the temple with the dating is installed at an external wall beside the temple. The present temple was built in the 7th year of the Tongzhi (同治, 1868) reign of the same dynasty. The temple was built for the worship of the Tin Hau deity by the fishermen of the Wan. She has been the most popular deity of fishermen and boat people. Two statues of Qianliyan (千里眼) and Shunfenger (順風耳) are standing in front of the Tin Hau altar protecting her. They can see and hear people in distress far away so that they could be saved by Tin Hau.

**Historical
Interest**

The temple is a Qing vernacular building of a two-hall-one-courtyard plan. A quarters for the keeper was built on its left. The courtyard originally open was covered in the later stage. The building was probably constructed of stones with lime and mud bond together with its walls and columns to support its pitched roofs of timber rafters, purlins and clay tiles. The walls are plastered and painted in grey with false brick lines. The floors are with ceramic tiles. The altar is at the end wall of the main hall houses the Tin Hau deity in the middle. The main ridge is with vertical geometric mouldings topped with two *aoyus* (鰲魚) and a pearl in the middle. Wall friezes and a fascia board at the front façade are with flowers and rocks motifs and calligraphy. Its gables are with black-and-white friezes of *ruilong* (夔龍) pattern.

**Architectural
Merit**

It is one of the three Tin Hau temples on the island. It is to remind the fishing settlement of Sok Kwu Wan.

Rarity

It has little built heritage value. It has undergone renovations in 1923, 1932, 1962, 1992 and 1999.

**Built Heritage
Value &
Authenticity**

Tin Hau Festival (天后誕) on the 23rd of the third lunar month is not celebrated by the villagers but on the 18th of the fourth lunar month. Shen Gong opera (神功戲) performance would be held in front of the temple on the 15th-19th days of the month. Fa Pow (花炮) activities would also be organized at the festival but on a drawing basis. It is said that during the Japanese Occupation (1941-45) a naval base was planned with the construction of a Kamikaze Grotto (神風洞) in Sok Kwu Wan. The temple was used as an armoury by the Japanese army during the war.

**Social Value,
& Local Interest**