

Historic Building Appraisal
Chou Wong Yi Kung Study Hall
Kam Tin, Yuen Long

Chou Wong Yi Kung Study Hall (周王二公書院) in Shui Tau Tsuen (水頭村) of Kam Tin (錦田), Yuen Long, was founded in 1684 to commemorate Zhou Youde (周有德), Viceroy of Guangdong and Guangxi (兩廣總督), and Wang Lairen (王來任), Governor of Guangdong (廣東巡撫), for their help in lifting the Evacuation Edict in the Kangxi reign (康熙, 1662-1722) of the Qing (清) dynasty. In the early years of the Qing dynasty, the Ming (明) loyalties still had their base in Taiwan and attacked the mainland coasts. The Qing government adopted an evacuation policy to stop help given to the loyalties and troubles made by ordering all the inhabitants to move 50 Chinese *li* (里) inland in 1662. The entire territory including Kam Tin was within the region and the people became refugees and many killed. In view of the situation, Wang urged the Emperor to rescind the edict in 1668. He however died shortly afterwards and the petition was continued by Zhou. The people were allowed to return to their homeland in 1669 and the edict was finally lifted in 1682. To reciprocate the two officials, many people in coastal Guangdong erected temples to commemorate them including the Po Tak Temples (報德祠) in Shek Wu Hui (石湖墟) and Sha Tau Hui (沙頭墟). This study hall was one erected by the Tang clan in Kam Tin to honour them as well as to provide a venue for educating the children in the area.

Historical Interest

The study hall is a Qing vernacular building having a two-hall-one-courtyard plan of three bays. The courtyard is between the halls and flanked by two side chambers, one on each side. It is in symmetrical design with the altar worshipping the two officials' tablets at the far end of the central axis in the middle of the main hall. The building was constructed of green bricks with its walls supporting the pitched flushed gable roofs. The recessed entrance has granite doorframe and a name board above the lintel. The ridges are with geometric pattern. Its fascia boards and wall friezes have carvings, mouldings and paintings of calligraphy, auspicious patterns of flowers-and-plants, dragons and treasures. An annex was added to its left for kitchen use.

Architectural Merit

It is a rare study hall to show the historic past of Kam Tin.

Rarity

Being an old study hall of some 300 years, it has considerable built heritage value.

Built Heritage Value

The building is internally and externally plastered and some of its roofs and

Authenticity

columns reinforced with concrete. The floors have been concrete-screeded. This would very much diminish its authenticity.

Many historic buildings such as Tang Tsing Lok Ancestral Hall (清樂鄧公祠), Hung Shing Temple (洪聖宮), Cheung Chun Yuen (長春園) and this one have co-related group value. **Group Value**

Apart for the worship of the two officials and teaching purposes, it was for erecting important public requirements such as the weighting of grain engraved in a stone tablet installed at the hall. The hall is still worshipped by villagers in Kam Tin. **Social Value, & Local Interest**