

Historic Building Appraisal

Hakka Wai – Study Hall

Tsung Pak Long, Sheung Shui

Hakka Wai (客家圍, literally, Walled Village of the Hakkas) in Tsung Pak Long (松柏塢), Sheung Shui, was built by two Hakka brothers, Wong Kin-sheung (黃建常) and Wong Kin-man (黃建文). The Wongs were from Huizhou (惠州) of Guangdong (廣東) province who later moved to Lai Chi Wo (荔枝窩) founded by their ancestor Hei-fung (喜鳳). It is believed that the construction of Hakka Wai commenced between the 1900s and early 1910s and was completed by 1920. Wong Kin-man had worked in South America sending remittance to his brother for the construction of the village compound. The village compound was built for easy access of the Wongs who had business in Tai Po Market (大埔墟). An ancestral hall was constructed at the row of buildings to commemorate Wong Shek-chung (黃錫宗) – the father of the two brothers. A second row of buildings was constructed in the village in the 1920s when the other three brothers of Kin-sheung and Kin-man moved in from Lai Chi Wo. For the education of the village children, a study hall was constructed connecting to the southern end of the wall.

**Historical
Interest**

When the village was first built, 50 skilful workers from Huizhou were employed for the construction. Each house cost 500 dollars. The two rows of houses are Qing (清) vernacular buildings are of Hakka *doulang* (斗廊) style. The houses are connected units. Each unit is composed of two projecting bays sandwiched by a recessed bay with a courtyard in front forming a plan resembling the Chinese character *ao* (凹), meaning ‘indented’. The shape is like an indented container called *aodou* (凹斗) in Chinese. The units of the houses are called *doulang*. The entrance of the house is at the recessed bay. Behind it is the courtyard flanked by two side chambers, one on either side. The hall behind the courtyard is for the living room with side rooms on its left and right. Inter-accessible doorways were made between units but most of them blocked due to independence of families. The buildings were constructed of green bricks with its pitched walls to support its pitched roofs of timber rafters, round purlins and ceramic tiles. Parapet walls are with the projecting bays which have plastered fish-shaped rainwater drainage holes (fish mouths). Plastered mouldings of flowers, birds, treasures and plants are on the wall friezes of the projected bays. Wall paintings of flowers, birds, and calligraphy are on the wall friezes of the recessed bays. The ridges are with geometric mouldings.

**Architectural
Merit**

The buildings are rare to witness the settlement of the Wongs in Tsung Pak Long. *Rarity*

The buildings are in a sample Hakka walled village of *doulang* style having high built heritage value. *Built Heritage Value*

The authenticity is kept though with some of its features modified. *Authenticity*

The residential houses, ancestral hall, the study hall, the watchtower, the wall and entrance gate are having co-related group value. *Group Value*

The Wongs were not farmers and their business was in Tai Po Market and in Kowloon. Kin-sheung had an import and export company and a pawnshop called Po Hing (寶興) in Tai Po New Market (大埔新墟). He was one of the founding directors of Kwong Wah Hospital (廣華醫院) in 1907 and Kin-man was a director in 1922. Kin-man was a treasurer of Tsung Tsin Association (崇正總會), a Hakka organization, in 1921. The two brothers also served in the first term of Heung Yee Kuk (鄉議局). The Sung Tak Wong Kin Sheung Memorial School (崇德黃建常紀念學校), in Tai Po, was founded by the villagers in 1985 to commemorate the elder brother. The traditional activities held by the Wongs include ancestral worship at their ancestral hall and grave sweeping of their ancestral grave in Ping Kong (丙崗), Sheung Shui, Lin Fa O (蓮花澳) and Tai Po. They would also participate at the Da Chiu (打醮) activities in Lai Chi Wo. *Social Value & Local Interest*