

Historic Building Appraisal

Sam Tung Uk

Kwan Tei North Tsuen, Fanling

Sam Tung Uk (三棟屋) is a huge residence built by Li Chung-chong (李仲莊, **Historical Interest** 1874-1968) in Kwan Tei (軍地) of Fanling in the 1910s. It is a detached building by the northern side of Sha Tau Kok Road (沙頭角公路).

Li Chung-chong gained the title of *xiangsheng* (庠生, high school graduate) at the age of 20 in Guangzhou (廣州). He was involved in salt trade of his family having eight ships for transportation of salt between Guangzhou and Shantou (汕頭). He was a district representative called Tsz Yi (諮議) who dealt with the government on matters of the New Territories starting in the 1910s. He was elected as the chairman of the New Territories Agriculture, Industry, and Commerce Research Association (租界農工商研究總會). He was the first chairman of Heung Yee Kuk (鄉議局) in 1926. He was one of the founders of Luen Wo Hui (聯和墟) established in 1951. He was appointed an unofficial Justice of the Peace in 1947 and received a Coronation Medal in 1953.

Li Chung-chong was a 21st generation member of the Li clan in Nam Chung Lei Uk (南涌李屋) of Sha Tau Kok (沙頭角). Li Yik-fat (李奕發), a 17th generation member, was the founding ancestor moved from Guishan (歸善) of Guangdong (廣東) province to Nam Chung some 150 years ago. The Lis are Hakkas (客家) originated from Shanghang (上杭) of Fujian (福建) province. Li Chung-chong and his four brothers bought land from the Tangs (鄧) and established Ko Po Tsuen (高莆村) in the east of Kwan Tei in the 19th century. They moved from Nam Chung to Ko Po as they considered the land in Ko Po was of better *fung shui* and environment. The Lis also had a Kung Cheong Brick Kiln (公昌磚窯) with two kilns between Kwan Tei and Ko Po having the bricks sold in the New territories.

Li Chung-chong bought land from the Haus (侯) of Hung Leng (孔嶺) and built the Sam Tung Uk residence for his own use. He had eight sons, six of them lived in the house with their families. The house was also a place for family gatherings and entertainment. Before the 1970s, the Li family members held wedding feasts in the residence and organized Chinese opera performances for their guests. Wedding banquets were held at restaurants since the 1970s. Descendents of his six sons still occupy the residence.

The residence is a Qing (清) vernacular two-storey building having a **Architectural Merit** three-hall-two-courtyard plan of three bays. It is constructed of green bricks and rammed earth with its walls to support its pitched roofs of timber rafters, purlins and clay tiles. The green bricks were produced by a brick kiln owned by Chung-chong. The two open courtyards are between the entrance, middle and main

halls. Side chambers are on either side of the three halls. The side chambers were for the bedrooms and living rooms use. A *dongzhong* (擋中) is at the middle hall. An altar is in the middle of the end wall at the main hall housing a soul tablet of the Lis for worship with an offering table in its front. Photographs of Tak-lai (德禮), Chung-chong's father, Chung-chong and members of his family are on display at the hall. Two tie beams with carving of “百子千孫” and “長命富貴” (Hundred of Sons and Thousand of Grandsons; Longevity, Wealth and Honour) are at the main hall. Two *huazhaos* (花罩) are at the entrances of the middle and main halls with carvings of pine, crane, birds, peony, vase and auspicious subjects. Wall paintings and fascia boards of plum, pine and flowers are also at the two entrances. The walls are plastered and painted. Its floors are with cement screeding.

It is a residence of Li Chung-chong and his descendents to witness their settlement in the village. **Rarity**

It has some built heritage value.

Built Heritage Value &

Two structures were added on the right side of the building and the left chamber on the right of the entrance hall was enlarged respectively in the 1950s and 1970s. This would slightly affect the authenticity of the building. **Authenticity**

Chung-chong and his sons had ancestral worship at Sam Tung Uk and also at the ancestral hall in Nam Chung. Dim Dang (點燈) ritual for new born baby boys at Nam Chung. Tsing Kun Study Hall (靜觀書室) in Lei Uk (李屋) village of Nam Chung was built by the Lis in 1900. It was the only study hall in Nam Chung providing traditional education for its clan children and later to others in Wo Hang (禾坑) and Wu Kau Tang (烏蛟騰). **Social Value, & Local Interest**