

Historic Building Appraisal

Hau Chung Fuk Tong Communal Hall

Kam Tsin, Sheung Shui

The Haus (侯) in Kam Tsin (金錢), Sheung Shui were the descendants of the fifth generation of Hau Ng-long (侯五郎, 1022-1084), a *jinshi* (進士) of the Northern Song dynasty (北宋, 960-1127) who moved from Xin'an (新安) of Guangdong to the New Territories in late Southern Song dynasty (南宋, 1127-1279). Their ancestors first settled in Ho Sheung Heung (河上鄉) of Sheung Shui and later branched out to Kam Tsin, Ping Kong (丙崗), Yin Kong (燕崗) and Hung Leng (孔嶺). Hau Chung Fuk Communal Hall (侯宗福堂神廳) is believed to be built in the last years of the Qianlong reign (乾隆, 1736-1795), Qing (清) dynasty for the worship of the Earth God (土地) which has a shrine at the far end of the original village (now separated by Castle Peak Road near Yin Kong Tsuen). It is believed that the hall was built to thank the Earth God who had given special help to one of the ancestors of the village. To the left of the communal hall is a two-storey watch-tower added in the early 20th century and to the right another two-storey structure, Chung Fuk School (宗福學校), in the 1920s. The former was built for protecting the villagers from bandits and enemies from other villages. The latter was for the teaching of Chinese classics for village children and later replaced by a Ho Tung School (何東學校) established in the village.

**Historical
Interest**

The communal hall is a one-hall building of Qing vernacular design. At the end of the hall is the altar for the Earth God. Compartments are divided irregularly in the hall for different uses including a kitchen. The watch tower and the school have each one pediment and name moulded respectively Chung Fuk Tong (宗福堂) for the former and Chung Fuk School for the latter. Structurally the greenbrick walls support the pitched roofs which are with timber rafters, purlins and clay tiles. The ridges are with geometric pattern decoration and the fascia boards and friezes are with flowers-and-rocks decorations.

**Architectural
Merit**

A rare historic building to show the development of the village.

Rarity

The multi-function of the building has considerable built heritage value. Part of the in and out of the building has been unsympathetically plastered slightly affects its authenticity. A refurbishment was carried out in 1990.

**Built
Heritage
Value &
Authenticity**

It has great relative group value with the shrine.

Group Value

The school is being rented out for residential use.

*Adaptive
re-use*

Since there is no ancestral hall in the village, the communal hall is a venue for other village activities. The Earth God Festival (or the Festival of Fuk Tak , 福德大王誕) on the 18th day of the first lunar month, is highly celebrated by the villagers who regard it as the most important among all festivals. Cantonese opera performances and Fa Pow (花炮) activities will be held as well in the open ground opposite the hall.

*Social Value,
& Local
Interest*