

Historic Building Appraisal
Che Kung Temple
Che Kung Miu Road, Tai Wai, Sha Tin

Che Kung Temple (車公廟) in Sha Tin was probably erected before the 16th year of Guangxu reign (光緒, 1890) of the Qing (清) dynasty as a stone tablet of its renovation has the dating. The temple was built by villagers in Sha Tin for the worship of Che Kung, a native of Nanchang (南昌) of Jiangxi (江西) province in the Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279) who is legendarily a general having supreme power to suppress rebellion and renowned for his loyalty to the Emperor. Also he has power to dispel epidemics. At a time when a plague killing a lot of Sha Tin people, they begged for the blessing of Che Kung who finally pacified it. A temple was then built to commemorate the deity. The temple was managed by nine villages of Sha Tin, called Alliance of Nine (九約) until 1936 taken over by the Chinese Temples Committee (華人廟宇委員會) up till now. The temple has been famous for its windmill in recent decades which believed it could bring luck to the worshippers. It has then become very popular especially on the 2nd day of the first lunar month, the Che Kung Festival (車公誕), leading to disorder in the temple. This leads to the expansion of the temple in 1993 where a new temple eight times the size of the old one was built and the compound enlarged to 2,552 square hectares. The old temple is now only open to the public occasionally.

*Historical
Interest*

It is a two-hall structure with one side chamber on its left and right in Qing vernacular design. The pitched-roof building has a renovation in 2004 using new materials to dress up the temple. Whilst retaining the granite door frame, lintel and base of the temple, the external walls are plastered with false brick lines and roofs with green glazed ceramic tiles. A pair of ceramic dragons and a pearl were installed on the ridge and wall and gable friezes decorated with paintings and mouldings of landscapes, flowers-and-rocks and geometric pattern motifs.

*Architectural
Merit*

The Che Kung Temple is a rare type of temple in Hong Kong.

Rarity

The simple historic temple has moderate built heritage value to reflect the development of Sha Tin areas. Numerous repairs have been carried out to the temple with some dated including those in 1890, 1993 and 2004. The recent renovation has very much diminished the authenticity of temple.

*Built
Heritage
Value &
Authenticity*

The old temple has group value with the new one built in 1993.

Group Value

The new temple is crowded with worshippers in the early morning on the first festival of Che Kung for his very best blessing. Three others on the 27th day of the third, the 6th day of the sixth and the 16th day of the eighth lunar months are not that popular. Da Chius (打醮) were held on the 23rd day of the tenth lunar month to feature the deity's warding off epidemic power tradition but has been replaced by Shen Gong opera performances (神功戲).

*Social Value,
& Local
Interest*