

Historic Building Appraisal

Village House

No. 3 Ko Po Tsuen, Fanling

Ko Po Tsuen (高莆村) is in the east of Kwan Tei (軍地), Fanling. It was inhabited mainly by the Lis (李) who moved from Nam Chung (南涌) of Sha Tau Kok (沙頭角) in the 19th century. Li Yik-fat (李奕發) was the 17th generation ancestor of the Li clan moved from Guishan (歸善) of Guangdong (廣東) province to Nam Chung some 150 years ago. The Lis are Hakkas (客家) who originated from Shanghang (上杭) of Fujian (福建) province. The Lis considered the land in Ko Po was of better *fung shui* and environment. Li Chung-chong (李仲莊), a 21st generation member of the clan, bought land from the Tangs (鄧) and established the village with his four brothers. A row of three houses were built around the end of the 19th century by the Lis, Nos. 1 and 2 inhabited by Li Chung-chong, No. 3 by his fifth brother, Nos. 4-7 by his eldest brother. The three units each has its own entrance, chambers, rooms and halls. Another row of western style houses at Nos.8-12 on their left was built by the fourth brother. A pond is in front of the houses.

***Historical
Interest***

An entrance gate was built a short distance at the mouth of the village in the north. A new vehicular road was later constructed in the south that the original footpath and the entrance gate became obsolete. The three entrance gates of Nos.1 to 7 and their connecting tall walls in their front formed a security wall for the houses behind. Each unit has an open courtyard between the entrance gate and the main houses at the back. Side chambers of various sizes are on either side of the three entrance gates. The houses at Nos.4-7 were rebuilt into modern ones leaving the entrance gate intact only. The No.3 unit is a Qing (清) vernacular building constructed of green bricks with its wall to support its pitched roofs of rafters, purlins and clay tiles. The entrance gate is in an H-shaped plan which pitched roof is with yellow glazed tiles and a pair of yellow tiled geometric mouldings at its two ends. The two-storey main building is a three-bay structure with a hall in the middle bay flanked by one room on either side. An altar housing a soul tablet of the ancestors is at the end wall of the hall for worship. Wall frieze paintings of landscape and calligraphy are at the recessed entrance. A fascia board with carving of unicorn, bat and peony is under the eave. Bedrooms are on the upper floor. The ridge of the building is with curling ends. The building is plastered and painted. Its floors are with cement screeding and ceramic tiles.

***Architectural
Merit***

It is a residence of the Lis to witness their settlement in the village.

Rarity

It has some built heritage value.

*Built Heritage
Value*

Its authenticity is kept.

Authenticity

It has group value with the two units next door.

Group Value

Li Chung-chong (1874-1968) gained the *xiangsheng* (庠生, high school graduate) title at the age of 20 in Guangzhou (廣州). He was involved in the salt trade of his family having eight ships transporting salt between Shantou (汕頭) and Guangzhou. 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. He became a wealthy merchant and involved in local affairs. 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) which later became the Heung Yee Kuk (鄉議局) established in 1926. Chung-chong was its first chairman. He built a block of residence called Sam Tung Uk (三棟屋) in Kwan Tei in the 1910s for his family. Li Chung-chong passed away in Ko Po Tsuen in 1968. The Lis had their ancestral worship and Dim Dang (點燈) ritual for new born baby boys at Nam Chung. The 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*