

Historic Building Appraisal
Chung Ancestral Hall
No. 34 Ha Tin Liu Ha, Tai Po

Ping Long (坪朗), Tai Om Shan (大菴山) and Tin Liu Ha (田寮下) are three Hakka (客家) villages in Lam Tsuen (林村/ 林村鄉) of the Chungs who are the descendants of Chung Ning-kau (鍾寧玖). Ning-kau settled in Ping Long from Qingqi (清溪) of Dongguan (東莞), Guangdong (廣東) province, in the 25th year of the Kangxi (康熙, 1686) reign of the Qing (清) dynasty (1644 – 1911). One of his sons Kau-yuan (久元) moved to Tai Om Shan in the 42nd year (1703) of the same reign whilst his other two sons, Kau-hin (久顯) and Kau-tat (久達), remained to stay in Ping Long. One of Kau-yuan's sons Yuk-chin (毓遷) moved to Tin Liu Ha later to establish a new village. Another son Yuk-shau (毓秀) moved to Ping Chau (坪洲) island in the north-east of Hong Kong in the second year of Yongzheng (雍正, 1724) reign of the same dynasty. His other son Yuk-hing (毓興) chose to stay in Tai Om Shan. Tin Liu Ha is on the east side of Lam Kam Road (林錦公路) and is one of the twenty-six villages in Lam Tsuen. Tin Liu Ha was later subdivided into Sheung Tin Liu (上田寮下, or literally upper Tin Liu Ha) and Ha Tin Liu Ha (下田寮下, or literally lower Tin Liu Ha). The latter was developed in later stage. It is said that this Chung Ancestral Hall (鍾氏家祠) was first built in Sheung Tin Liu Ha in the Qianlong (乾隆, 1736-1795) reign of the Qing dynasty but relocated to Ha Tin Liu Ha due to *fung shui* reason. The first hall was said to be built by Ting-yuk (廷玉), son of Yuk-chin, to commemorate his father who founded the village. The present hall has a history of over a hundred years. There were three ancestral halls in the village, one of which has been abandoned. The other one called Chung Man Tsoi Ancestral Hall (鍾文彩家祠) was erected by another branch of the Chungs who moved from Tsai Kek (寨𨵿) in the southeast of Ha Tin Liu Ha.

**Historical
Interest**

Located in the far eastern end of the village, the ancestral hall was in the middle of a block of three houses. It shares with its neighbouring two houses a common roof for its entrance and main halls. It is a Qing vernacular building having a two-hall-one-courtyard plan. It is constructed of grey brickwork with its walls to support its pitched roofs of timber rafters, purlins and clay tiles. Except the front facade and part of the internal walls, the walls of the building are plastered. The floors are of cement screeding. The doorframe is of granite. In the end hall is an altar housing a soul tablet of the Chung ancestors for worship. Behind the tablet is a big gold colour Chinese character “壽” (longevity) written on the wall. A pair of *ruilong* (夔龍,

**Architectural
Merit**

geometric dragon) mouldings of different designs is at the two ends of the front and rear ridges. The front ridge has curling ends. The name of the hall is engraved on a piece of stone above the lintel of the recessed entrance. Under the front eaves are wall frieze paintings of plants and flowers and calligraphy. Wall frieze paintings at the main hall are of phoenix, peony and flowers.

It is an ancestral hall of the Chungs to remind their settlement in Ha Tin Liu Ha in Lam Tsuen, and has some built heritage value. It was renovated in 1958, 1969 and 1979. The roof at the open courtyard has been turned into concrete reinforced one. The authenticity is basically kept.

***Rarity, Built
Heritage
Value &
Authenticity***

It is within walking distance of other historic buildings, including Chung Man Tsoi Ancestral Hall (Grade 3), Nos. 24B – D and Nos. 32 – 33 (both Grade 2), in the village.

Group Value

The ancestral hall has been serving a venue for launching traditional rituals and ceremonies of the clan. Other than ancestral worship, wedding and funeral ceremonies and *dim dang* (點燈, literally lighting the lantern) ritual were held at the hall. The Chungs having moved away from the village would return to the ancestral hall at the Chinese New Year to make worship to their ancestors.

***Social Value,
& Local Interest***