

Historic Building Appraisal

Tin Hau Temple

Kat Hing Back Street, Tai O

Tin Hau Temple (天后古廟) in Kat Hing Back Street (吉慶後街) of Tai O (大澳), Lantau, was connected to the left of the Kwan Tai Temple (關帝古廟) which was built in the 6th year of the Qianlong (乾隆, A.D. 1741) of the Qing (清) dynasty. The Tin Hau Temple was constructed in the 37th year (A.D. 1772) of the same reign as a bell in the temple has the year engraved on it. Tai O was an important village reputed for its production of salt as far back as the Song (宋, A.D. 960-1279) dynasty. It was also a fishing village where many fishermen anchored and resided onshore. Tin Hau (天后) deity has always been the protective goddess of the fishermen and boat people.

**Historical
Interest**

The temple is only about one third of the width and of equal length of the Kwan Tai Temple. It is however a bit shorter in height than the latter. The temple is a Qing vernacular building having a two-hall-one-courtyard plan. The open courtyard between the entrance and main hall has been covered with a tiled roof. The building is constructed of green bricks with its walls to support its roofs of timber rafters, purlins and clay tiles. The walls have been plastered. Its doorframe and lower courses of the front wall are of granite. The altar at the end wall of the main hall houses a statue of the Tin Hau deity for worship with an offering in its front. A standing statue of Qianliyan (千里眼) and of Shunfenger (順風耳) are respectively on the left and right of the hall. An altar of the Door God (門神) and another altar of the Earth God (土地) are on the left and right of the entrance hall. A side door is connected to the Kwan Tai Temple on its right. The front ridge is decorated with a red *ruilong* (夔龍) mouldings at its two ends with lion mouldings in the middle. A fascia board under the front eave is of flowers, birds and bats carvings. The name of the temple is engraved above the lintel flanked by wall paintings of figures and landscape. The upper portion of the front wall is covered with white ceramic tiles.

**Architectural
Merit**

It is a Tin Hau Temple to witness the history and settlement of Tai O.

Rarity

It has some built heritage value.

**Built Heritage
Value**

The temple was renovated in 1835, 1852, 1903, 1959, 1975, 1987 and 1997. Its authenticity is basically kept.

Authenticity

It has close group value with the Kwan Tai Temple next door.

Group Value

Tin Hau Festival (天后誕) on the 23rd of the third lunar month would be highly celebrated by the fishermen, boat people and residents of Tai O. Cantonese opera performance (神功戲) would be held in the playground in front of the temples to celebrate the festival.

Social Value,
& Local
Interest