

Historic Building Appraisal
Tong Ancestral Hall
No. 18 Man Uk Pin, Sha Tau Kok, New Territories

Man Uk Pin (萬屋邊) is a Hakka (客家) village on the north-western side of Sha Tau Kok Road (沙頭角路) close to Wo Hang (禾坑). It was recorded as a Hakka village in *Gazetteer of Xin'an County* (新安縣志) published in the 25th year of the Jiaqing reign (嘉慶二十五年, 1820) of Qing Dynasty (清朝). The village was first settled by the Mans (萬氏) who came from Wuhau (五華) of Guangdong (廣東) province in the late 17th century. The Mans later moved out of the village and stayed in Heung Yuen (香園), Ping Che (坪峯) and Tong Fong (塘坊) nearby. The village was later settled by the Chungs (鍾氏) and the Fus (傅氏) in the 18th century and followed by the Tongs (唐氏), the Laws (羅氏), the Chans (陳氏) and others. Some of them have moved overseas. The Tongs came to the village around the 19th century from Pingshan (坪山) of Guangdong. The **Tong Ancestral Hall** (唐氏宗祠) was built after they settled in the village. Eight ancestral halls were built in the village but only four including this one still stand. Those of the Chungs and the Fus were rebuilt losing their authenticity.

**Historical
Interest**

The Tong Ancestral Hall is a Qing (清) vernacular building having a two-hall-one-courtyard plan. The open courtyard is between the entrance and main halls. The building is constructed of green bricks with its walls to support its pitched roofs of timber rafters, purlins and clay tiles. The walls are mainly plastered and painted. The side walls of the courtyard and the entrance hall are in rectangular shape. The floors are cement-screeded. The altar is a simple raised platform at the end wall without any decoration having a soul tablet of the Tong ancestors for worship. A tiny statue of Kwun Yam (觀音) is on the left of the tablet also for worship. The ridge and the front façade are without any decoration. The name of the hall is engraved on a piece of stone on the wall above the lintel of the recessed entrance.

**Architectural
Merit**

It is an ancestral hall of the Tongs to remind their settlement in Man Uk Pin village.

Rarity

It has little built heritage value.

**Built Heritage
Value**

The authenticity is basically kept.

Authenticity

Other than ancestral worship, Kwun Yam is also worshipped at the hall. The Tongs do not keep their soul tablets at home and have the ancestral hall worship at the hall during the Chinese New Year and at the Chung Yeung (重陽節), Ching Ming (清明節), Mid-Autumn (中秋節), Dragon Boat (端午節) and Ghost Festivals (盂蘭節). They would normally prepare Hakka banquets and tea cakes (茶粿) as their offerings and for their own consumption. Wedding, funeral and Dim Dang (點燈) rituals were held at the ancestral hall.

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

The Earth God in the village, known as Fuk Tak Kung (福德公) or Wai Chu Pak Kung (圍主伯公), is housed in a shrine located in the middle of the village and is sometimes referred to as the “common ancestor” of all eight lineages in the village. In addition to Fuk Tak Kung and ancestral halls, there is Tai Wong (大王) located outside the village as well as other Earth Gods, such as Shui Tau Pak Kung (水頭伯公, “Earth God at the source of water”) at the riverbank.

Group Value

It is considered that the question of adaptive re-use does not arise at the present time.

***Adaptive
Re-use***