

Historic Building Appraisal

Hau Wong Temple

Tung Chung, Lantau Island

Being one of the three Hau Wong temples in Lantau, this one (侯王宮) at Sha Tsui Tau (沙咀頭) in Tung Chung is also for the worship of the Hau Wong (侯王). Its close location to the Tung Chung Fort has the common indication that Hau Wong was a patron deity of the military officials and soldiers in the Qing (清) dynasty or earlier. Studies on Hau Wong temples indicate they might be built for the loyalty of the Marquis Yang Liangjie (楊亮節) who fled with the last Emperors Xia (昞) and Bing (昞) to Kowloon and Lantau on the last days of the Southern Song dynasty (南宋 1127-1279). Or the temple built might be just to memorize an ordinary Hau (侯, marquis) rather than the Marquis Yang, or both, who had the mighty power to give protection, security and to ward off evils for the fishermen, villagers, soldiers and others.

Historical Interest

The temple bell was dated 1765 when it was erected by some indigenous wealthy indigenous villagers in Tung Chung and Lei Kau Yuen Tong (李久遠堂, Hall of Lee Kau-yuen), which donated the land. A plaque in the temple also records the dispute of land among the landlord and the tenant in the Qianlong years in 1768-1777. The temple is managed by the Tung Chung Rural Committee (東涌鄉事委員會) and the Chinese Temples Committee (華人廟宇委員會).

The temple consists of one main hall in the middle and two side halls to its left and right. Another hall for keeper's quarters and storage, probably a later addition, is built next to the right side hall. The temple is in Qing vernacular style which halls are all with double-gable roofs. The Shiwan (石灣) ceramic decorations on the main ridge of the main hall including firing pearl, *aoyu* (鰲魚), opera figurines and others are the most valuable feature of the temple. Plaster wall friezes at its façade and gable walls and the interior fascia boards are of inferior quality.

Architectural Merit

It is one of the six Hau Wong temples in Hong Kong though it is not the most popular one. It is a medium-sized Hau Wong temple demonstrating one of the types built in the early Qing (清 in 1765).

Rarity & Built Heritage Value

Recorded renovations have been carried out in 1878, 1919, 1962 and 1993. Other than the subsidiary hall added which looks not parallel to the main halls, the rest are in good authentic order. The later replaced fixtures such as the Shiwan ceramics and wall friezes are skillfully blended into the existing historic structure.

Authenticity

Hau Wong Festival has been celebrated in Tung Chung on 18th day of the eighth lunar month rather than the 6th day of the sixth as in Tai O probably because of the

Social Value & Local Interest

difference in lifestyle whilst the former residents are mainly farmers and the latter fishermen. Cantonese opera performance, lion dance and others are normally held to celebrate the festival and to thank the deity for his blessing throughout the year. With the construction of the new airport and new town in Tung Chung, easy access to the temple has attracted more people to visit the temple.