

**Historic Building Appraisal**  
**Tang Yu Kai Study Hall**  
**No. 1 Shui Tau Tsuen, Kam Tin, Yuen Long**

Tang Yu Kai Study Hall (鄧虞階書室) is one of the six study halls in the historic Shui Tau Tsuen (水頭村) of the Tang (鄧) clan in Kam Tin (錦田), Yuen Long. It was built by Tang Yu-kai (鄧虞階), alias Ming-siu (鳴韶), in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century to provide a venue for the branch of children to study aiming at gaining titles at the Imperial Civic Service Examination. Yu-kai was the youngest son of the four sons of Tang Kuen-hin (鄧權軒, 1755-1822), the 21<sup>st</sup> generation ancestor of the Tang clan, who built the So Lau Yuen (沂流園) study hall. The family of Kuen-hin gained three *xiucai* (秀才) and four *wuju* (武舉) degrees in the Qianlong (乾隆, 1736-1795) and Daoguang (道光, 1821-1850) reigns of the Qing (清) dynasty. Yu-kai himself was a *xiucai*. He built the hall when he gained his fortune. It is the largest study hall in size among all those in the village.

**Historical  
Interest**

The study hall is in the southern end of the village and a short distance southeast of Yi Tai Study Hall (二帝書院). It is a sizable Qing vernacular building having a two-hall-one-courtyard plan of five bays. Two recessed bays having each an entrance hall and a main hall with an open courtyard in-between are sandwiched by three projected side bays having side rooms and side chambers. Two entrances are at the recessed bays. It is constructed of green bricks with its walls to support its pitched roofs of timber rafters, purlins and clay tiles. The external walls are retained with their fair-faced green bricks. The internal walls are plastered and painted. The floors are cement-screeded. An altar is at the end wall of the right main hall houses the soul tablets of Tang Yu-kai and his six wives for worship. Most of the rooms and chambers are added with mezzanine floors. The open courtyards were covered with corrugated sheets when the building was used as a factory. Walls were added in the side rooms and chambers when it was a factory. Weathered geometric mouldings are at the ends of the front and rear ridges.

**Architectural  
Merit**

It is a study hall of the Tang clan to witness their settlement and history in Kam Tin.

**Rarity**

It has some built heritage value.

**Built Heritage  
Value**

The use of the building as a factory very much diminishes the authenticity of the building.

**Authenticity**

It has group value with the historic buildings in the village including Lik Wing Tong Study Hall (力榮堂書室), So Lau Yuen, Yi Tai Study Hall, Hung Shing Temple (洪聖宮), Loi Shing Tong (來成堂) and many others. **Group Value**

Ming-si (鳴時) and Ming-hok (鳴鶴), the elder brothers of Yu-kai, was respectively a *xiucai* and a *wuju*. Ming-hok was then a military officer of the sixth grade (六品武官) who built another study hall, Cheung Chun Yuen (長春園), in the village. Members of the branch having titles and official positions in the Qing government were highly respected in the community. The teachers employed to teach at the hall were from the mainland and accommodation was provided for them at the study hall. Traditional Chinese books and classics were taught to students of mixed classes. Towards the modernization of the education in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the study hall was gradually replaced by the modern school established. The Kam Tin Mung Yeung Public School (錦田公立蒙養學校), established in 1926, with its campus enlarged in 1952 finally replaced the study hall. The building is still used as a gathering place and for basin meals (盆菜) of the branch and the clan. The building was rented for use as a foam factory in the late 1970s until 1985. **Social Value, & Local Interest**