

Historic Building Appraisal
Chung Ancestral Hall
No. 21 Ping Long, Tai Po, New Territories

Ping Long (坪朗) is a Hakka (客家) village and one of the 23 villages in Lam Tsuen Valley (林村鄉). During the Qing times Lam Tsuen was a member of Tsat Yeuk (七約, literally, Seven Alliance). Tsat Yeuk was an inter-village alliance which formed Tai Wo Market (太和市) in 1892 to break the monopoly of the old Tai Po Market (大埔墟) formed by the Lung Yeuk Tau Tang clan (龍躍頭鄧氏). Of the 23 villages of Lam Tsuen Valley, only five are Punti (本地) while the other are Hakka. The history of Lam Tsuen Valley can be traced back to Song Dynasty (宋朝, A.D. 960-1127). Its early settlers were the Chungs (鍾氏) who form a large proportion of the population in the area. The villages were linked together by an alliance named Luk Woh Tong (六和堂), which was derived from the *baojia* system (保甲制) in the Qing Dynasty (清朝, 1644-1911). Luk Woh Tong remained its key role in the valley until it was replaced by the Lam Tsuen Valley Committee (林村鄉公所) in 1954.

*Historical
Interest*

In early times, Ping Long was not a single-surname village as the Chengs (鄭氏) also owned houses there. Afterwards, the Chengs moved out. The Chungs in Ping Long are the descendents of Chung Ning-kau (鍾寧玖) who moved from Qingqi (清溪) of Dongguan (東莞) in the 25th year of the reign of Emperor Kangxi (康熙, 1686) of Qing (清) Dynasty. Two of his sons, Chung Kau-hin (鍾久顯) and Chung Kau-tat (鍾久達), remained to stay in Pin Long. His other son, Chung Kau-yuan (鍾久元), moved to Tai Om Shan (大菴山) in Tai Po in the 42nd year (1703) of the same reign. Later on, the sons of Chung Kau-yuan moved to Ping Chau (坪洲) in the north-east of Hong Kong and Tin Liu Ha (田寮下) in Tai Po to establish a new village. Thus, Ping Long, Tai Om Shan and Tin Liu Ha have a close tie of kinship and good mutual relations.

The descendents of Chung Kau-hin and Chung Kau-tat built ancestral halls of their own respectively in the village. The Chung Ancestral Hall (鍾氏家祠) at No.21 Ping Long was built **about 200 years ago** by the descendents of Chung Kau-tat. The other Chung ancestral hall at No. 36A of the village was built by the descendents of Kau-hin more than 250 years ago.

The Chung Ancestral Hall (鍾氏家祠) at No.21 Ping Long is a Qing vernacular building having a one-hall-one-courtyard plan. It is constructed of green bricks with its walls to support its pitched roofs of timber rafters, purlins and clay tiles. The walls of the building are plastered. The front façade, the floor and the altar are covered with new tiles. An altar is in the middle of the end wall housing a soul tablet of the Chung ancestors for worship. Two side timber altars

*Architectural
Merit*

each also with a soul tablet and an incense burner are on the side wall of the hall. The name of the hall is engraved on a piece of stone on the wall above the lintel of the recessed entrance. On either side of the name board and under the eave of the main hall are wall frieze paintings of flowers, rocks, birds and curling leaves. A tie beam at the hall is with the Chinese characters “百子千孫” (Hundreds of Sons and Thousands of Grandsons) engraved on it.

It is an ancestral hall to witness the settlement of the Hakka Chungs in Ping Long village. **Rarity**

It has some built heritage value. **Built Heritage Value**

The building was renovated in 1992. **Authenticity**

The ancestral hall is still used for ancestral worship of the Chung ancestors of the Chung Kau-tat branch. The Chungs have their special offerings at the hall at festivals and Chinese New Year. They also held funerals in the ancestral hall and took part in the Tai Ping Ching Chiu (太平清醮) organized by the Lam Tsuen villagers. Since the descendents of Chung Kau-hin abandoned their ancestral hall because of their Christian belief, this ancestral hall is the only one in the village. **Social Value, & Local Interest**

It has group value with another ancestral hall of the Chungs in the village. **Group Value**

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