

Historic Building Appraisal

Tin Hau Temple

Ma Wan Town, Ma Wan

The Tin Hau Temple (天后古廟) of Ma Wan Town (馬灣市) is in the south-east of Ma Wan Island. It is one of the two Tin Hau temples on the island and the biggest. For the worship of Tin Hau, it was built by boat people in the area probably before the 7th year of the Xianfeng (咸豐, 1860) reign of the Qing (清) dynasty as a stone tablet of the temple renovation has the year inscribed on it. It is also said that the temple was built by the famous pirate Cheung Po-tsai (張保仔) for observation use. Two commemorative boards presented by the Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs in 1878 and 1888 are still on display at the temple. A custom station was established on the island in the late Qing dynasty.

**Historical
Interest**

Located at the seashore facing the sea to the south-east, the temple was built against a small hill at its back. It is a Qing vernacular building having a two-hall-one-courtyard plan. A small block of structure is connected to its right for storage use with separate entrance. The building is constructed of green bricks with its walls to support its pitched roofs of timber rafters, purlins and clay tiles. A statue of the deity is placed in the middle of the altar against the end wall of the main hall. The doorframe, wall corners and lower courses of the front walls are of granite. The name of the temple is above the doorway flanked by two wall paintings of landscape. Its main ridge and descending ridges are with geometric mouldings. Its front walls are painted white whilst its side and back walls are painted red.

**Architectural
Merit**

It is the oldest surviving temple and the biggest Tin Hau temple on the island. It is a Tin Hau temple to witness the settlement of the Ma Wan people.

Rarity

It has some built heritage value.

**Built Heritage
Value**

It was renovated in 1860, 1881, 1961 and 1970 with many unknown ones. Its authenticity is kept.

Authenticity

Tin Hau Festival (天后誕) on the 23rd of the third lunar month would be celebrated by villagers and boat people on the island. Activities including Cantonese opera performances and lion dance organized by the Ma Wan Rural Committee (馬灣鄉事委員會) would be held at the open ground in front of the temple.

**Social Value,
& Local
Interest**